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THE JUDGMENT OF MAN

BY

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ILLUSTRATED BY THOMAS FOGARTY

WE were sitting around the big center table in the sala of the "House of Guests" in Ilo-Ilo. We were teachers from Occidental Negros. It was near Christmas; we had left our stations for the holidays — the cholera had just swept them and the aftermath was not pleasant to contemplate — and so we were leaning over the polished narra table, sipping a sweet, false Spanish wine from which we drew, not a convivial spirit, but rather a quiet, reflective gloom. All the shell shutters were drawn back; we could see the tin-roofed city gleam and crackle with the heat, and beyond the lithe line of cocoanuts the irridescent sea tugging the heart with offer of coolness. But, all of us, we knew the promise to be Fake, monumental Fake, knew the alluring depths to be hot as corruption, and full of sharks.

Somebody in a monotonous voice was cataloguing the dead, enumerating those of us who had been conquered by the climate, by the work, or through their own inward flaws. He mentioned Potter with some sort of disparaging gesture, and then Carter of Balangilang, who had been very silent, suddenly burst into speech with singular fury.

"Who are you, to judge him?" he shouted; "who are you, eh? Who are we, anyway, to judge him?"

Headlong outbursts from Carter were nothing new to us, so we took no offense. Finally some one said, "Well, he 's dead," with that tone that signifies final judgment, the last, best, most charitable thing which can be said of the man being weighed.

But Carter did not stop there. "You did n't know him, did you?" he asked; "you did n't know him; tell me now, *did* you know him?" He was still extraordinarily angry.

We did not answer. Really, we knew little of the dead man — excepting that he was mean and small, and not worth knowing. He was mean, and he was a coward; and to us in our uncompromising youth these were just the unpardonable sins. Because of that we had left him alone, yes, come to think of it, very much alone. And we knew little about him.

"Here, I 'll tell you what I know," Carter began again in a more conciliatory tone; "I 'll tell you everything I know of him." He lit a cheroot.

"I first met him right here in Ilo-Ilo. I had crossed over for supplies; he was fresh from Manila and wanted to get over to Bacolod to report to the Sup. and be assigned to his station. When I saw him he was on the muello, surrounded by an army of bluffing cargadores. About twelve of them had managed to get a finger upon his lone carpet-bag while it was being carried down the

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gang-plank, and each and all of them wanted to get paid for the job. He was in a horrible pickle; could n't speak a word of Spanish or Visayan. And the first thing he said when I had extricated him, thanks to my vituperative knowledge of these sweet tongues, was: 'If them niggahs, seh, think Ah'm a'goin' to learn their cussed lingo, they 're mahtily mistaken, seh!'

"After that remark, coming straight from the heart, I hardly needed being told that he was from the South. He was from Mississippi. He was gaunt, yellow, malarial, and slovenly. He had 'teached' for twenty years, he said, but in spite of this there was about him something indescribably rural, something of the sod — not the dignity, the sturdiness of it, but rather of the pettiness, the sordidness of it. It showed in his dirty, flapping garments, his unlaced shoes, his stubble beard, in his indecent carelessness in expectorating the tobacco he was ceaselessly chewing. But these, after all, were some of his minor traits. I was soon to get an inkling of one of his major ones — his prodigious meanness. For when I rushed about and finally found a lorcha that was to sail for Bacolod and asked him to chip in with me on provisions, he demurred.

"'Ah'd like to git my own, seh,' he said in that decisive drawl of his.

"'All right,' I said cheerfully, and went off and stocked up for two. My instinct served me well. When, that evening, Potter walked up the gang-plank, he carried only his carpet-bag, and that was flat and hungry-looking as before. The next morning he shared my provisions calmly and resolutely, with the air, almost, of conscious duty. Well, let that go; before another day I was face to face with his other flaming characteristic.

"Out of Ilo-Ilo we had contrary winds at first; all night the lorcha — an old grandmother of a craft, full of dry-rot spots as big as woodpeckers' nests — flapped heavily about on impotent tacks, and when the sun rose, we found ourselves on the same spot from which we had watched its setting. Toward ten o'clock, however, the monsoon veered, and wing-and-wing the old boat, creaking in every joint as if she had the dengue, grunted her way over flashing combers with a speed that seemed almost indecent. Then, just as we were getting near enough to catch the heated glitter of the Bacolod church-dome, to see the golden thread of beach at the foot of the waving cocoanuts, the wind fell, slap-bang, as suddenly as if God had said hush — and we stuck there, motionless, upon a petrified sea.

"I did n't stamp about and foam at the mouth; I 'd been in those climes too long. As for Potter, he was from Mississippi. We picked out a comparatively clean spot on the deck, near the bow; we lay down on our backs and relaxed our beings into infinite patience. We had been thus for perhaps an hour; I was looking up at a little white cloud that seemed receding, receding into the blue immensity behind it. Suddenly a noise like thunder roared in my ears. The little cloud gave a great leap back into its place; the roar dwindled into the voice of Potter, in plaintive, disturbed drawl. 'What the deuce are the niggahs doing?' he was saying.

"And certainly the behavior of that Visayan crew was worthy of question. Huddled quietly at the stern, one after another they were springing over the rail into the small boat that was dragging behind, and even as I looked the last man disappeared with the painter in his hand. At the same moment I became aware of a strange noise. Down in the bowels of the lorcha a weird, gentle commotion was going on, a multitudinous 'gluck-gluck' as of many bottles being emptied. A breath of hot, musty air was sighing out of the hatch. Then the sea about the poop began to rise, to rise slowly, calmly, steadily, like milk in a heated pot.

"'By the powers,' I shouted; 'the old tub is going down!'

"It was true. There upon that sunlit sea, beneath the serene sky, silently, weirdly, unprovoked, the old boat, as if weary, was sinking in one long sigh of lassitude. And we, of course, were going with it. A few yards away from the stern-post was the jolly-boat with the crew. I looked at them, and in my heart I could not condemn them for their sly departure; they were all there, arraiz, wife, children, and crew, so heaped together that they seemed only a meaningless tangle of arms and legs and heads; the water was half an inch from the gunwale and the one man at the oars, hampered, paralyzed on all sides, was splashing helplessly while the craft pivoted like a top. There was no anger in my heart, yet I was not absolutely reconciled to the situation. I searched the deck with my eyes, then from the jolly-boat the arraiz obligingly yelled, 'El biroto, el biroto!'

"And I remembered the rotten little canoe lashed amidships. It did n't take us long to get it into the water (the water by that time was very close at hand). I went carefully into it first so as to steady it for Potter, and then, both of us at once, we saw that it would hold only one. The bottom, a hollowed log, was staunch enough, but the sides, made of pitched bamboo lattice, were sagging and torn. It would hold only one.

"The absurdity of the thing suddenly tingled in me like wine. 'All right!' I shouted in a contagion of insanity; 'all right, take the darned thing!'

"And I got out. I got out and let him step stiffly into the boat which I obligingly sent spinning from the lorcha with one long, strong kick. Then I was alone on the deck, which suddenly looked immense, stretched on all sides, limitless as loneliness itself. A

"'Why the deuce don't you paddle to shore?'"

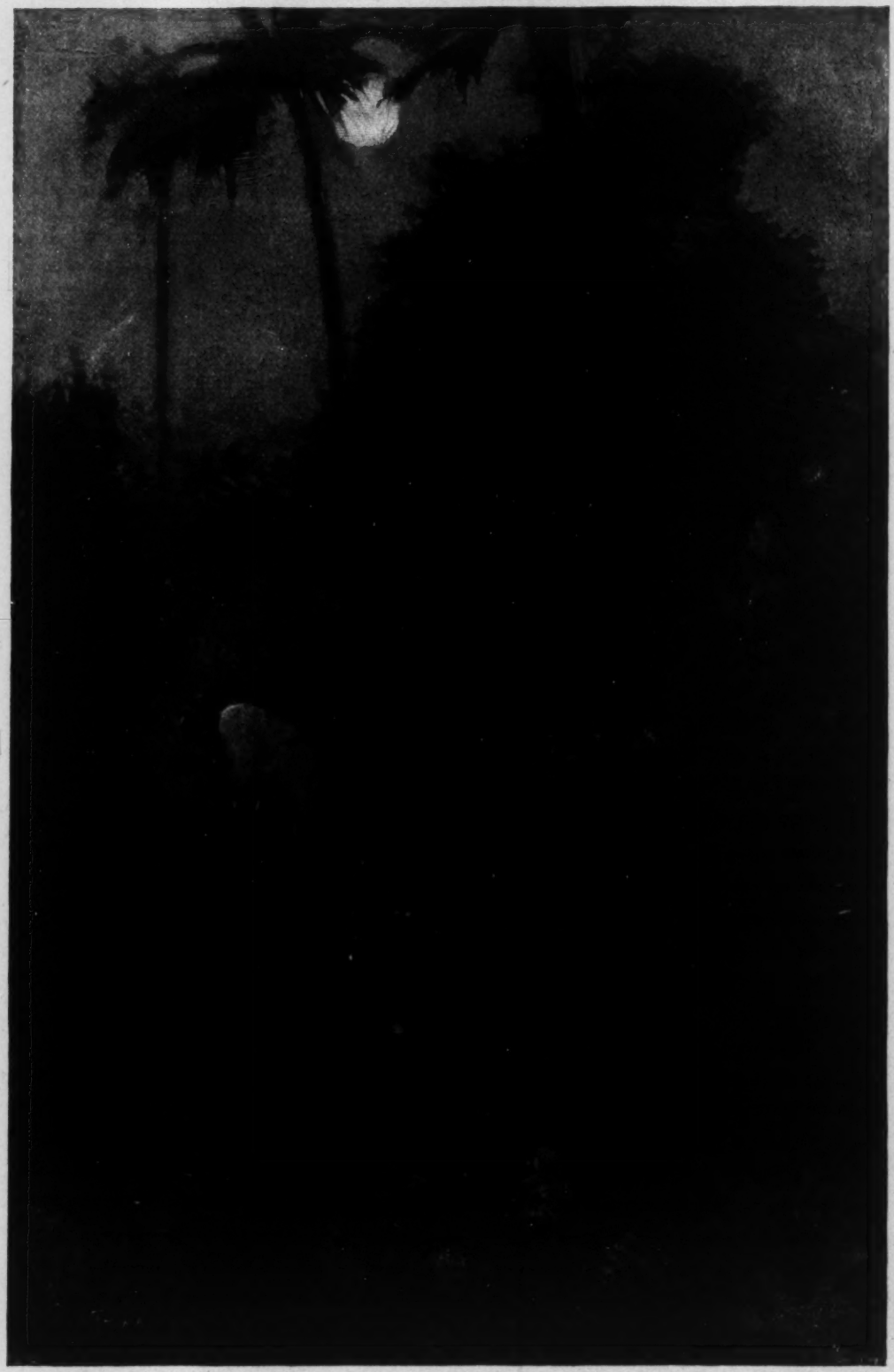
"'Well, who is it?' I asked. In my heart there was no craven panic, but neither was there sacrifice. Some vague idea was in my mind, of deciding who should get the place by some game of chance, tossing up a coin, for instance.

"But Potter said, 'Ah cain't affawd to take chances, seh; you must git out.'

"He spoke calmly, with great seriousness, but without undue emphasis — as one enunciating an unconvertible natural law. I glanced up into his face, and it was in harmony with his voice. He did n't seem particularly scared; he was serious, that 's all; his eyes were set in that peculiar, wide-pupiled stare of the man contemplating his own fixed idea.

"'No, seh; Ah cain't affawd it,' he repeated.

heavy torpor fell from the skies and amid this general silence, this immobility, the cabin door alone seemed to live, live in weird manifestation. It had been left open, and now it was swinging and slamming to and fro jerkily, and shuddering from top to bottom. Half in plan, half in mere irritation at this senseless, incessant jigging, I sprang toward it and with one nervous pull tore it, hinge and all, from the rotten woodwork. I heaved it over the side, went in head first after it, took a few strokes and lay, belly-down, upon it. Just then the lorcha began to rise by the head; the bowsprit went up slowly in a noble gesture pointing to heaven; then, without a sound, almost instantaneously, the whole fabric disappeared. Across the now unoccupied space Potter and I rushed smoothly toward each other, as if drawn



"Suddenly he burst out of the obscurity . . . into the glaring moonlight"

by some gigantic magnet; our crafts bumped gently, like two savages caressingly rubbing noses; they swung apart a little and lay side by side, undulating slightly.

"And we remained there, little black specks upon the flashing sea. Two hundred yards away was the lorcha's boat; they had reshuffled themselves more advantageously and were pulling slowly toward land. Not twenty feet from me Potter sat upright in his canoe as if petrified. I was not so badly off. The door floated me half out of water, and that was lukewarm, so I knew that I could stand it for a good while. What bothered me, though, was that the blamed raft was not long enough; that is, the upper part of my body being heavier, it took more door to support it, so that my feet were projecting beyond the lower edge, and every second or so the nibbling of some imaginary shark sent them flying up into the air in undignified gymnastics. The consoling part of it was that Potter was paying no notice. He still sat up, rigid, in his canoe, clutching the sides stiffly and looking neither to right nor left. From where I lay I could see the cords of his neck drawn taut, and his knuckles showing white.

"'Why the deuce don't you paddle to shore?' I shouted at length, taking a sudden disgust of the situation.

"He did not turn his head as he answered. 'Ah — Ah,' he stammered, the words coming hard as hiccoughs out of his throat; 'Ah don't know haow.'

"'Drop the sides of your boat and try,' I suggested.

"He seemed to ponder carefully over this for a while. 'Ah think it's safer to stay this-a-way,' he decided finally.

"'But good lord, man,' I cried, angry at this calm stupidity; 'if that 's what you 're going to do you 'd better get on this door here and let me take the boat. I 'll paddle ashore and come back for you.'

"He turned his head slowly. He contemplated my raft long, carefully, critically.

"'Ah think Ah 'll be safer heyah, seh,' he decided. 'It 's a little bit o' old door, and Ah reckon they 's a heap of sharks around.'

"After that I had little to say. Given the premises of the man his conclusions were unquestionable. And the premises were a selfishness so tranquil, so ingenuous, so fresh, I might say, that I could n't work up the proper indignation It was something so perfect as to challenge admiration. On the whole, however, it afforded a poor subject for conversation; so we remained there, taciturn, I on my door, half-submerged in the tepid water, my heels flung up over my back, he in his dugout, rigid, his hands clutching the sides as if he were trying to hold up the craft out of the liquid abyss beneath.

"And thus we were still when, just as the sun was setting somberly, a velos full of chattering natives picked us up. They landed us at Bacolod, and Potter left me to report to the Sup. I departed before sun-up the next morning for my station. I did n't think I was interested in Potter. The chances of travel had displayed to me with fine vividness two of his prominent characteristics. They were meanness and cowardice. I did n't want to see him again.

"But I did. One night he came floundering through my pueblo. It was in the middle of the rainy season. He was n't exactly caked with mud; rather he seemed to ooze it out of every pore. He had been assigned to Binalbagan, ten miles further down. I stared when he told me this. Binalbagan was the worst post on the island, a musty, pestilential hole with a sullenly hostile population, and he — well, inefficiency was branded all over him in six-foot letters. I tried to stop him over night, but he would not do it, and I saw him splash off in the darkness, gaunt, yellow, mournful.

"I saw little of him after that. I was busy establishing new barrio-schools which were to give me excuses for long horseback rides of inspection. I felt his presence down there in that vague way by which you are aware of a person behind your back without turning around. Rumors of his doings reached me. He was having a horrible time. On the night of his arrival the Presidente, a kind old primitive soul, had invited him to dinner; but when he found that he was expected to sit at the table with the family he had stamped off, indignant, saying that he did n't eat with no niggers. As I 've said before, the town was hostile, and this beautiful attitude did not help matters much. He could n't get the school moneys out of the Tesorero — an unmitigated rascal — but that did not make much difference, for he had no pupils anyhow. He could n't speak a word of Spanish; no one in the town, of course, knew any English — he must have been horribly lonely. He began to wear camisas, like the natives. That 's always a

"'No, seh; Ah cain't take chances; Ah cain't affawd it'"

bad sign. It shows that the man has discovered that there is no one to care how he dresses — that is, that there is no longer any public opinion. It indicates something subtly worse — that the man has ceased looking at himself, that the *I* has ceased criticising, judging, stiffening up the *me* — in other words, that there is no longer any conscience. The white suit, I tell you, is a wonderful moral force; the white suit, put on fresh every morning, heavily starched, buttoned up to the chin, is like an armor, ironcladding you against the germ of decay hovering, flitting about you, ceaselessly vigilant for the little vulnerable spot. Potter wore camisas, and then he began to go without shoes. I saw that myself. I was riding through his pueblo on my way to Dent's, and I passed his school. I looked into the open door as my head bobbed by at the height of the stilt-raised floor. He was in his camisa and barefooted; his long neck, accentuated by the collarless garment, gave him a mournful, stork-like expression. Squatting on the floor were three trouserless, dirt-incrusted boys; he was pointing at a chart standing before their eyes, and all together they were shouting some word that exploded away down their throats in tremendous effort and never seemed to reach their lips. I called out and waved my hand as I went by, and when I looked back, a hundred yards farther, I saw that he had come out and was standing upon the bamboo platform outside of the door, gaping after me with his chin thrown forward in that mournful, stork-like way — I should have gone back.

"With him, I must say, the camisa did not mean all that I have suggested, not the sort of degradation of which it is the symbol in other men. The most extravagant imagination could not have linked him with anything that smacked of romance, romance however sordid. His vices, I had sized it, would come rather from an excess of calculation than from a lack of it. No, that camisa was just a sign of his meanness, his prodigious meanness. And of that I was soon given an extraordinary example.

"I had with me a young fellow named Ledesma whom I was training to be assistant maestro. He was very bright, thirsty to learn, and extremely curious of us white men. I don't believe that the actions of one of them, for fifty miles around, ever escaped him, and every day he came to me with some talk, some rumor, some gossip about my fellow-exiles which he would relate to me with those strange interrogative inflections that he had brought from his native dialect into English — as if perpetually he were seeking explanation, confirmation. One morning he said to me: 'The maestro Potter, he does not eat.'

"'No?' I answered absent-mindedly.

"'No, he never eats,' he reiterated authoritatively, although that peculiar Visayan inflection of which I have spoken gave him the air of asking a question.

"'Oh, I suppose he does,' I said carelessly.

"'He does not eat,' he repeated. 'Everyone in Binalbagan say so. Since he there, he has not bought anything at the store."

"'His muchachos bring him chicken,' I suggested.

"'No, señor; he very funny; he has no muchachos, not one muchacho has he.'

"'Well, he probably has canned provisions sent him."

"'No, señor; the cargadores they say that never, never have they carried anything for him. He does not eat.'

"'Very well,' I concluded, somewhat amused; 'he does not eat.'

"The boy was silent for a minute, then, 'Señor Maestro,' he asked with suspicious ingenuousness, 'can Americans live without eating?'

"So that I was not able to drop the subject as easily as I wished. And coming to a forced consideration of it, I found that my anxiety to do so was not very beautiful after all. A picture came to me — that of Potter on his bamboo platform before his door, gazing mournfully after me, his chin thrown forward. It did not leave me the day long, and at sundown I saddled up and trotted off toward Binalbagan.

"I did n't reach the pueblo that night, however. Only a mile from it I plunged out of the moonlight into the pitch darkness of a hollow lane cutting through Señor Basson's hacienda. Banana palms were growing thick to right and left; the way was narrow and deep — it was a fine place for cutthroats, but that evocation had lost much of its romantic charm from the fact that, not three weeks before, an actual cutthroating had taken place, a Chinese merchant having been boloed by tusilanes. Well, I was trotting through, my right hand somewhat close to my hostler, when from the right, close, there came a soft, reiterated chopping noise. I pulled up my pony. The sound kept up

"The muchacho drew nearer, and with the torch over my shoulder I examined them"

— a discreet, persistent chopping; then I saw, up above, the moonlit top of a palm shuddering though all about it the others remained motionless, petrified as if of solid silver. It was a very simple thing after all: some one in there was cutting down a palm to get bananas, an occupation very common in the Philippines and very pacific, in spite of the ominous air given to it by the gigantic bolo used. However, something prompted me to draw the midnight harvester out.

"'Maayon gabi; good evening,' I shouted.

"There was a most sudden silence. The chopping ceased, the palm stopped vibrating. A vague form bounded down the lane, right up against my horse's nose, rolled over, straightened up again, and vanished into the darkness ahead. Unconsciously I spurred on after it. For a hundred yards I galloped with nothing in sight. Then I caught a rapid view of the thing as it burst through a shaft of moonlight piercing the glade, and it showed as a man, a grotesque figure of a man in loose white pantaloons. He was frightened, horribly frightened, all hunched up with the frenzy to escape. An indistinct bundle was on his right shoulder. Like a curtain the dark snapped shut behind him again, but I urged on with a wild halloo, my blood all a-tingle with the exultation of the chase. I gained — he must have been a lamentable runner, for my poor little pony was staggering under my tumultuous weight. I could hear him pant and sob a few yards in advance; then he came into sight, a dim, loping whiteness ahead. Suddenly the bundle left his shoulder; something rolled along the ground under my horse's hoofs — and I was standing on my head in a soft, oozy place. I was mad, furiously mad. I picked myself up, went back a few yards and, taking my pony by the nose, picked *him* up. A touch of his throbbing flanks, however, warned me as I was putting my foot into the stirrup. I left him there and thundered on foot down the lane. I have said I was mad. Yip-yip-yah-ah, yip-yip-yah-ah I yelled as I dashed on — a yell I had heard among California cattle men. It must have paralyzed that flying personage, for I gained upon him shockingly. I could hear him pant, a queer, patient panting, a sigh rather, a gentle, lamenting sighing, and the white camisa flapped ghostily in the darkness. Suddenly he burst out of the obscurity, past the plantation, into the glaring moonlight. And I — I stopped short, went down on my hands and knees, and crouched back into the shadow. For the man running was Potter; Potter, wild, sobbing, disheveled, his shoulders drawn up to his ears in terrible weariness, his whole body taut with fear, and scudding, scudding away, low along the ground, his chin forward, mournful as a stork. Soon he was across the luminous space, and then he disappeared into the darkness on the other side, flopped head first into it as if hiding his face in a pillow.

"I returned slowly to my horse. He was standing where I had left him, his four legs far apart in a wide base. Between them was the thing cast off by Potter which had thrown us. I examined it by the light of a box of matches. It was a bunch of bananas, one of those gigantic clusters which can be cut from the palms. I got on my horse and rode back home.

"I did n't go to see him any more. A man who will steal bananas in a country where they can be bought a dozen for one cent is too mean to be worth visiting. I had another reason, too. It had dawned on me that Potter probably did not care to see any of us, that he had come down to a mode of life in which he would not be thankful for confrontation with past standards. It was almost charity to leave him to himself.

"So I left him to himself, and he lived on in his pestilential little hole, alone, lived a life more squalid every day. It was n't at all a healthy life, you can understand, no healthier physically than morally. After a while I heard that he was looking bad, yellow as a lemon and the dengue cracking at his bones. I began to think of going to him after all, of jerking him out of his rut by force, if necessary, making him respect the traditions of his race. But just then came that Nichols affair, and flaring, his other bad side — his abject cowardice — reappeared to me. You remember the Nichols thing — boloed in the dark between my town and Himamaylan. His muchacho had jumped into the ditch. Afterward he got out and ran back the whole way, fifteen miles, to my place. I started down there. My idea was to pick up Potter as I passed, then Dent a little further down, find the body, and perhaps indications for the constabulary to whom I had sent a messenger and who would not be able to get down till morning. Well, Potter refused to go. He had caught hold of some rumor of the happening; he was barricaded in his hut and

was sitting on his bed, a big Colt's revolver across his knees. He would not go, he said it plainly. 'No, seh; Ah cain't take chances; Ah cain't affawd it.' He said this without much fire, almost tranquilly, exactly as he had, you remember, at the time of our shipwreck. It was not so amusing now, however. Here, on land, amid this swarming, mysterious hostility, at this crisis, it seemed a shocking betrayal of the solidarity that bound all us white men. A red rage took possession of me. I stood there above him and poured out vituperation for five good minutes. I found the most extraordinary epithets; I lowered my voice and pierced him with venomous thrusts. He took it all. He remained seated on his bed, his revolver across his knees, looking straight at some spot on the floor; whenever I'd become particularly effective he'd merely look harder at the spot, as if for him it contained something of higher significance — a command, a rule, a precept — I don't know what, and then he'd say, 'no, Ah cain't: Ah cain't affawd it.'

"I burst out of there, a-roar like a bombshell. I rode down to Dent; we rode down to the place and did — what there was to be done. Potter I never wanted to see again.

"But I did. Some three weeks later a carrier came to me with a note — a penciled scrawl upon a torn piece of paper. It read: 'I think I am dying. Can you come see me? Potter.'

"I went down right away. He was dead. He had died there, alone, in his filthy little hut, in that God-forsaken pueblo, ten miles from the nearest white man, ten thousand miles from his home. He had died there all alone.

"I 'll always remember our coming in. It was night. It had been raining for thirty-six hours, and as we stepped into the unlighted hut, my muchacho and I, right away the floor grew sticky and slimy with the mud on our feet and, as we groped about blindly, we seemed ankle-deep in something greasy and abominable like gore. After a while the boy got a torch outside, and as he flared it I caught sight of Potter on his cot, backed up into one corner. He was sitting upright, staring straight ahead and a little down, as if in careful consideration. As I stepped toward him the pliable bamboo floor undulated; the movement was carried to him and he began to nod, very gently and gravely. He seemed to be saying: 'No, Ah cain't affawd it.' It was atrocious. Finally I was by his side and he was again motionless, staring thoughtfully. Then I saw what he was considering. In his hands, which lay twined on his knees, were a lot of little metallic oblongs. Gently I disengaged them. The muchacho drew nearer, and with the torch over my shoulder I examined them. They were photographs, cheap tintypes. The first was of a woman, a poor being, sagging with overwork, a lamentable baby in her arms. The other pictures were of children — six of them, boys and girls, of all ages from twelve to three, and under each, in painful chirography, a name was written — Lee Potter, Amy Potter, Geraldine Potter, and so on.

"You don't understand, do you? For a moment I did n't understand. I stared stupidly at those tintypes, shuffled and reshuffled them; the torch roared in my ear. Then, suddenly, understanding came to me; it came sharp as a pang. He had a wife and seven children.

"A simple fact, was n't it, a commonplace one, very bourgeois, you might say. And yet what a change of view produced by it, what a dislocation of judgment! I was like a man riding through a strange country, in a storm, at night. It is dark, he cannot see, he has never seen the country, yet as he rides on he begins to picture to himself the surroundings, his imagination builds for him a landscape — a mountain there, a river here, wind-streaming trees over there — and right away it exists, it *is*, it has solidity, mass, life. Then suddenly comes a flash of lightning, a second of light, and he is astounded, absolutely astounded to see the real landscape different from that indestructible thing that his mind has built. Thus it was with me. I had judged, oh, I had judged him thoroughly, sized him up to a certainty, and bang, came the flare of this new fact, this extremely commonplace fact, and I was all off, all off. I must begin to judge again, only, it would never do that man any good.

"A hundred memories came back to me, glared at me in the illumination of that new fact. I remembered the camisa, the bare feet. I saw him running down the lane with his bunch of stolen bananas, I recalled that absurd scene on the waters; I heard him say: 'No, seh; Ah cain't affawd to take chances; Ah cain't affawd it.'

"Of course he could n't afford it. Think — a wife and seven children!

"That night I went through his papers, putting things in order, and from every leaf, every scrap came corroboration of the new fact. It was easy enough to patch up his life. He was one of those poor white-trash pedagogues of the South, shiftless, half-educated, inefficient. He had never been able to make more than twenty dollars a month, and his family had always gently starved. Then had come the chance, the golden chance — the Philippines and a thousand a year. He had taken the bait, had come ten thousand miles to the spot of his maximum value. Only, things had not gone quite right. Thanks to the beautiful red-tape of the department three months had gone before he had received his first month's pay. Then it had come in Mex. and when he had succeeded in changing it into gold it had dwindled to sixty dollars. Of course, he had sent it all back, for even then it would take it six more weeks to reach its destination, and sixty dollars is hardly too much to tide over five months for a family of eight. These five months had to be caught up in some way, so every month his salary, depreciated ten per cent by the change, had gone across the waters. He wore camisas and no shoes, he stole bananas. And his value, shoeless, camisa-clothed, was sixty dollars a month. He was just so much capital. He had to be careful of that capital.

"'Ah cain't affawd to take chances; Ah cain't affawd it.' Of course he could n't.

"And so he had fought on blindly, stubbornly and, at last, with that pitiful faculty we have, all of us, of defeating our own plans, he had killed himself, had killed the capital, the golden goose.

"Yes, I found confirmation, but after all, I did not need it. I had learned it all; understanding had come to me, swift, sharp, vital as a pang, when in the roaring light of the torch I had looked upon the pale little tintypes, the tintypes of Lee and Amy and Jackson and Geraldine."

THE VISION IN THE CITY

BY

ROBERT GILBERT WELSH

BRED in the town am I,
So would I will to be,
Loving its glimpses of sky,
Swayed by its human sea.

Out of its greed and scorn,
Strong hands and kindly reach;
Over its discords borne,
Listen — what gentle speech.

Here in the surging crowd
Modern in habit and names,
Linger all unavowed,
Simon Peter and James.

Judas goes cringing by
Heavily browed and wan —
Yonder with timid eye
Passes the loving John.

On yonder flower-booth raised,
Pallid, the blossoms lean —
There in the lilies He praised,
Look! The Nazarene!

BENEATH THE "BULLDOG'S" BILGE

BY

T. JENKINS HAINS

AUTHOR OF "CRUISE OF THE PETREL"

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY REUTERDAHL

THE brig lay in four fathoms of water on the edge of the Great Bahama Bank. She had been a solid little vessel, built for the fruit trade, and she was about two hundred tons register. Her master had tried to sight the "Isaacs," but owing to the darkness and the drift of the Gulf Stream, he had miscalculated his distance in trying for the New Providence channel. A "nigger-head," a sharp, projecting point of coral, had poked a hole about four feet in diameter through her bottom, and she had gone down before they could run her into the shoal water on the bank.

Down to the graveyard of good ships, Key West, the message was hurried, and the wreckers of Florida Reef heard the news. A heavily built sloop of thirty tons, manned by ten Spongers and Conchs, started up the Florida channel and arrived upon the scene two days later.

The "Bulldog" had settled evenly upon her keel, but as she was sharp, she had listed until her masts were leaning well to starboard, dipping her yardarms deep in the clear water. She was submerged as far up as her topsail yards.

The captain of the wrecker was a Conch. His mate was a giant negro of the Keys; young, powerful, and the best diver on the Florida Reef. His chest measured forty-eight inches in circumference over his lean pectoral muscles, and he often bent iron bars of one-half inch to show the set of his vise-like grip. He was almost black, with a sinister-looking leer upon his broad face, his eyes red and watery like most of the divers of the Bank. He could remain under four fathoms for at least three and a half minutes, and work with amazing force, and continue this terrific strain for six hours on a stretch, with but five minutes between dives. Half fish or alligator, and half human, he looked as he lounged naked in the hot sunshine upon the sloop's forecastle, his skin hard and callous as leather from long exposure to a tropic sun and salt water. He was ready for the work ahead, for it had been rumored that the "Bulldog" had not less than fifty thousand dollars in silver aboard her. She was known to have been chartered by agents of the Venezuelan revolutionists, and to have arms and money aboard in abundance for their relief.

The day was well advanced when the spars of the brig showed above the sea. The sky was cloudless, and the little air there was stirring scarcely rippled the ocean; the swell rolling with that long, undulating sweep and peculiar slowness which characterizes calm weather in the Gulf Stream.

Far away the "Isaacs" showed above the horizon, and just the slightest glint of white told of the nearest cay miles away on the Great Bank. To the westward it was a trifle more than sixty miles to Florida Cape across the channel, with the deep ocean current sweeping to the northward between. The steady set of the Stream brought the wreckers rapidly nearer the brig in spite of the calm, and they let go their first anchor about fifty fathoms due south, and veered the cable to let the sloop drift slowly down upon the wreck. Then, lowering all canvas, they got out their kedges and moored the sloop just over the port rail of the "Bulldog" which could be distinctly seen about ten feet below the surface of the sea.

Three of the crew, all experienced divers, made ready while the mate went slowly to the rail and gazed fixedly down into the clear water. In calm weather the bottom

"The brig lay in four fathoms of water on the edge of the Great Bahama Bank"

on the Bank can be seen distinctly in five fathoms, and often at much greater depth. The weather was ideal now, and no one thought it necessary to use the "water-glass," the glass-bottomed bucket into which the diver usually sticks his head and gazes into the depths before making his plunge.

"I reckon ye might as well make a try," said the captain coming to the mate's side. "Start here an' let the drift o' the current take ye th' whole length." And as he spoke he hove a life-line overboard for the men to grasp should the stream carry them too far. Coming to the surface they would be tired and not want to swim back. A man stood by to haul in and save the diver the exertion.

The mate raised his eyes. He looked over the smooth sea and tilted his nose into the air, sniffing the gentle breeze.

"It might be a wery good day, Cap, but I sho' smells shurk. I ain't much perticular about this smooth weather. It nearly always brings 'em along 'bout dis time o' year. De season am mighty nigh done on de Bank. Yo' knows dey is mighty peart when dey gits plentiful."

"Are you feared?" asked the captain, looking at him scornfully.

"Well, I smell him plain, an' dats a fact," said the mate, "but here goes."

The giant mate fell slowly outboard, then putting his hands before him he dropped straight down into the sea with hardly a splash. The captain bent over the rail and watched him as he swam quickly down, his great black form looking not unlike a turtle as it struck out vigorously with both hands and feet. Down, down it went until the shimmering light made it distorted and monstrous as the distance increased. Then it disappeared under the bend of the "Bulldog's" bilge.

A second diver came to the side and looked out over the smooth swell.

There was nothing in sight as far as the eye could reach save the glint of white on the distant cay to the eastward. The Gulf Stream was undisturbed by even a ripple.

In a couple of minutes a loud snort astern told of the mate's reappearance. He seized the life-line and was quickly hauled alongside. He climbed leisurely to the deck.

All hands were now assembled and waited for his report.

"Tight as a drum. There ain't no way o' gettin' into her there," said the mate after two or three long breaths.

"Well, will you try the hatchway, then?" asked the captain.

"I ain't perticular about workin' down hatchways," said the giant, with a scowl.

"Nor me either," said the man who had come to make the second trip. "They said the stuff was aft under the cabin deck," said a tall man with aquiline features known as Sam.

"Dynamite," whispered another, "what's the difference?"

"Plenty, if the underwriters come along and find her blown up. She ain't ours yet," said the captain sourly.

"An' who's to tell?" asked the mate with a fierce menace. "Who'll know what knocked a hole in her. They'll nebber float her. Bust her, says I."

The captain looked about him. There was nothing in sight, save the distant cay, ten miles or more to the eastward, which might harbor an inquisitive person. And then the light-keeper, himself, was a wrecker. He thought a moment while the mate stood looking at him, and then went slowly down into the cabin and brought up a box of cartridges. Sam immediately brought out some exploders and several fathoms of fuse.

In a moment a large package was wrapped up and lashed with spun-yarn. It contained five half-pound cartridges and an exploder, with a fathom of fuse. A piece of iron was made fast to the whole to keep it upon the bottom, and then the mate called for a match. The fuse would burn for at least two minutes under water before the exploder was reached, and give time for the diver to get clear.

The captain scratched a light upon his trousers and held it to the fuse. A sputtering fizzing followed. Then over the side went the mate with the charge in his hand, and the men on the deck could see him swimming furiously down through the clear depths, the dynamite held before him and a thin spurt of bubbles trailing out from the end of the burning fuse.

He had little enough time to spare after he disappeared under the curve of the bilge. Coming to the surface he was quickly dragged aboard by the life-line, and then all hands waited a moment which seemed an hour, for the shock.

A dull crash below followed by a peculiar ringing sound told of the discharge. The water lifted a moment over the spot some twenty feet astern, and then a storm of

foam and bubbles surged to the surface. The captain gazed apprehensively around the horizon again, and then smiled.

"I reckon that busted her," he said.

Over the side plunged the mate, followed by two more men, and as they went a great, dark shadow rose slowly to the surface in the disturbed water. It was the body of a giant shark.

The captain stood looking at it for a moment.

"The harpoon, quick," he yelled.

A man sprang for the iron, but the monster rolled slowly over upon his belly, and opened his jaws with spasmodic jerks. A great hole was torn in his side, and his dorsal fin was missing. He gave a few quick slaps with his tail, and then sank slowly down before the harpoon could be thrown.

"He's as dead as salt-fish," said a sailor, "clean busted wide open."

"He's a tiger," said the captain, "an' they never hunt alone. I c'ud see his stripes."

A diver called from the end of the life-line and was hauled up. One after another they came up, the mate last.

"What was the thing yo' dropped overboard?" he asked with a grin. "I seen him sinking an' thought he ware alive."

"It was a tiger," said the captain solemnly, looking askance at the big man.

"That settles it fer me," said one diver, "they always go in pairs."

"Me too," went the chorus from the rest.

The mate said nothing. He had seen something below that made his eyes flash in spite of their salty rheum. The dynamite had done its work well, and with more daring than the others he had penetrated the hull far enough to catch a glimpse of the treasure. The explosion had scattered bright silver coins about the entrance of the hole, and he had seen what they had missed in the roiled water.

Here was a sore problem for the captain. He had the first chance at the wreck without observers, and here the carcass of a huge tiger-shark had upset everything. Within a few hours, the spars of other wreckers might show above the horizon, and then farewell to treasure-hunting. He could expect nothing but salvage at the most. If the owners decided to raise her he could do nothing more than sell his claim upon her, and probably lose most of that, for he was a poor man and dreaded the Admiralty courts. It would be much better if he could get what money there was in her, finding it in an abandoned hull. Having the whole of it in his possession was much better than trying to get back from the owners his share under the salvage law. Any delay for shark-hunting meant a heavy loss. He looked askance at the big mate, but said nothing, knowing full well that it lay with that black giant whether he would take the risk of going below again or not.

"I knew I smelt him plain enough," said the giant sniffing the air again," dem big shurks is mighty rank."

The shark which had met with the dynamite explosion was one of a pair of the great "carcharodon" variety. They had come in on the edge of the Bank at the beginning of the warm season, and one of them had slipped up along the bottom to the wreck not a minute after the mate had placed the charge. The package had attracted his attention, and it was while nosing it the charge had exploded, tearing him almost to pieces. His mate was but fifty fathoms away, and came slowly up to examine the place where the crash occurred.

The female was about twenty feet in length. She was lean and muscular from long cruising at sea, and her hide was as hard as the toughest leather. Vertical stripes upon her sides, black upon the dark gray of her body, gave her the name of "tiger." Her jaws were a good eighteen inches across, and her six rows of triangular teeth formed the most perfect cutting machine for anything made of flesh. The long tapering tail and huge fins told of enormous power, and her heavy frontal development proclaimed her of that somewhat rare species of pelagic monster which is very different in disposition to the thousands of sharks that infest all tropical seas.

She came upon the body of her mate as he sank slowly down, shattered and torn from the explosion. He lay motionless upon the clean coral bottom, and as she nosed him she came to the grisly wounds and knew he was dead. The feeling that the floating object above was responsible for his end took possession of her instinctively. He, her mate, had traveled with her for months and over thousands of miles of ocean. There was an attachment similar to that in evidence among the higher animals, and sullen fury at her loss grew against the thing above. It was like the implacable hatred of the cobra snake for the slayer of his mate, the snake who will follow the slayer's trail for miles to wreak vengeance. And as the monster's

fury was growing, the black diver was preparing to make a plunge for the money within the brig's bilge.

"Gimme a line," said the black man. "If dere is another feller like de one we busted down dere, yo' kin pull me back ef he don't git a good hold o' my laig. De water is mighty roiled yit, en I'd like to see a bit o' the bottom. 'Pears to me I seen something movin' astern dere."

The captain passed a line, and he fastened it around his waist. The rest of the crew stood looking on. Then taking a bag rolled tight in one hand to open below and fill with the silver, he gazed anxiously around the surrounding sea again.

"Here goes," said the big mate, "but I reckon it's de debble himself dats waitin' fer me, I feels it sho.'"

He went down with a straight plunge without any splash, and they watched him until he disappeared under the bends.

The mate had his eyes in use as he swam swiftly towards the hole made by the explosion. He watched the shadows upon the coral bottom in the dim light that penetrated the depths. The huge shadow of the brig cast a gloom over the white rock, and at the depth of her keel objects were hard to distinguish, except out beyond where the sunshine filtered down. He knew the location of the hole, and headed straight for it until the black and ragged mouth of the opening showed before him. He had just reached for it when a form shut off the light behind him. At the same instant the dread of something horrible flashed through his brain. He turned instantly to see the giant mouth of a monstrous shark close aboard, the teeth showing white against the dark edge of the throat cavity.

There was but a moment to spare. He must get away in the fraction of a second, and his quick mind, used to emergencies, seized upon the only way possible.

The line about his waist was still slack, and he dove headlong into the black mouth of the hole in the brig's bilge. The opening was just large enough to let him through, the splintered edges raking his back sorely as he entered. Then he turned quickly, hoping to see the monster sweep past.

The outline of the hole showed dimly, a ragged green spot set in inky blackness. He was ready to make a dash outboard, and swam to hold himself close to it, for the tendency was to rise into the black depths of the submerged hull. Inside was total darkness, and the unknown, submerged passages to some possible open hatchway beneath his own vessel's bottom were not to be thought of for safety. He could hold his breath but for a very short time longer, and he was more than twenty feet below the surface of the ocean. Even as he swam his foot struck something solid above him. He watched the hole and had just about decided that the monster had passed when the hole disappeared from view.

He knew he had not moved, for he could feel the stillness of the water about him. With a growing feeling of horror he groped for the opening.

In the total darkness he thought he was losing the instinct of direction. The danger of his position was so deadly that, in spite of his iron nerves, a panic was taking possession of him. To be lost in the hold of a sunken wreck appalled him for an instant. He must act quickly and accurately if he would live. The precious moments were passing, and his heart already was sending the blood with ringing throbs through his head. He made a reach ahead, and as he did so the greenish light of the hole in the bilge came again before him. He struck out for it powerfully. Then it failed again, but as it did so he made out the form that was closing it. The great head of the shark was thrust into the opening, withdrawn again as though to try to get a better position to force its way in, and then came total blackness.

The mate was failing fast. He had been under water more than two minutes. He saw that it was certain death to force the entrance. Outside waited the monster who would cut him to pieces before he could reach the surface and help from his vessel. It was a horrible end. The thought of a mangled form being devoured into the bowels of such a creature decided him. Any death but that. He hesitated no longer, but with maddening haste he swam upward into the blackness, groping, struggling through doors and passages, wildly, aimlessly trying for a blind chance that he might at last come through the hatchway into the sea above

He had cast off the line to his waist as soon as it came taut, and instantly it flashed upon him that he had severed the last link between himself and his men. On and on he struggled, the bright flashes of light which now began to appear before his eyes, caused by the strain and pressure, made him fight

wildly forward, thinking that they came from the light outside. He knew he was lost. The picture flitted before him of the men hauling in the line. Then the silence of the deck in the sunshine and the looks of his shipmates, the case of "lost man." He had seen it before when he was upon the deck, and now it was his turn below. A bulkhead brought him to a sudden stop. He reached upward and found the solid deck. It was no use. He gave one last gigantic stroke forward along the obstruction and started to draw in his breath, which meant the end. Then his head suddenly came out of the water into air, and his pulses leaped again into action.

The pressure was not relieved upon his lungs, and it was some moments before he recovered. Then his great strength came back to him and he began to grope about in the blackness until his feet came in contact with a step. He felt along this and found that it was evidently a companionway leading to the deck above. He put forth his hands into the space overhead and found a solid roof but a foot or less above the surface of the water he was in. Then it dawned upon him that he was beneath the coamings of the hatchway, and the air was that which had been caught under the top as the brig had settled. She had only been sunk about fifty-five hours, and the air had not found its way through the tight cover overhead. It was compressed by the pressure of the water above it. It was only about twelve feet to the surface from where he now rested, and if he could get free he might yet get away safely. The shark was probably below under the bilge, trying to get in the hole and would not notice him if he came up through the hatchway. He could make a dash for the surface, and call for a line before the monster could locate him. The air within the small space was already getting used up while he waited to recover. There were not more than half a dozen cubic feet of it altogether, and he must work quickly if he would be free.

He now groped for the fastenings of the hatchway, hoping to seize them and force the slide back. The covering was of peculiar pattern, high-domed above the coamings, and it was for this reason that the air had failed to find its way through the front of the opening. He felt for the lock and finally found that the hasp was on the outside. He was locked below.

He had been away from the sloop for more than five minutes now, and the men aboard had hauled in the line. It came fast enough, and some leaned over the rail watching until the end came into view. Then they knew, or fancied they knew, the story.

"Gone, by God," came the exclamation from the captain — "he was right — they always travel in couples — " Then he stood there with the rest, all gazing steadfastly down into the clear water of the Gulf Stream that now went past crystal-like and undisturbed. The dim forms of the coral showed below, but nothing like the shape of either man or shark was visible. The disturbed water from the blast had all gone to the northward with the current, and they wondered. If there were a monster lurking in the depths, he must be well under the brig's bilge in the deep shadow. The line told the story the eye failed to reach. It was not new, the story of a lost diver on the Bahama Bank.

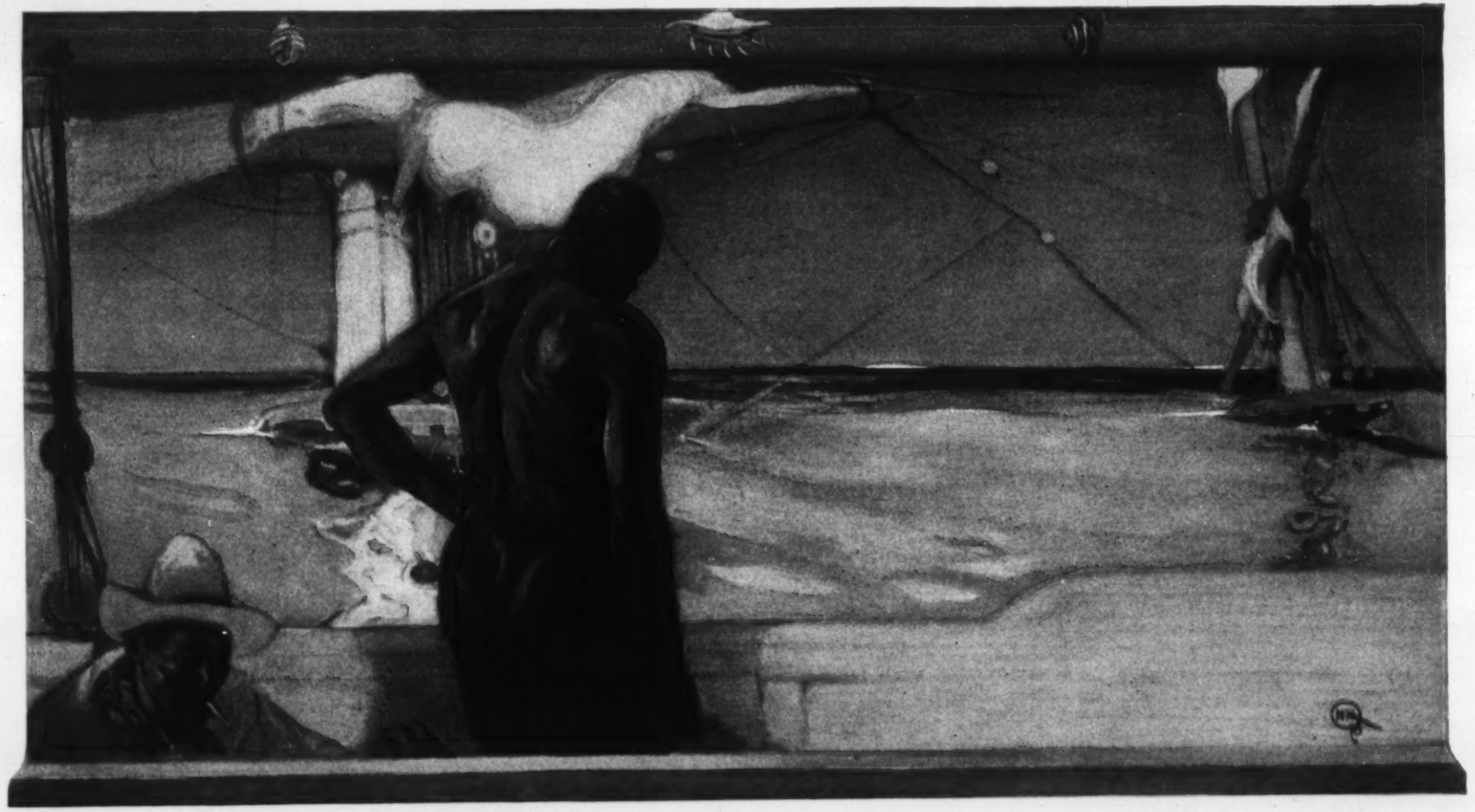
They hung over the side and spoke seldom, when they did, it was in a low tone. There was nothing to do, for no one had the hardihood to make the plunge to find out what had happened. They must wait for the wrecking crew. Diving was not to be thought of again for hours.

Meanwhile the mate was below in the dome of the hatchway.

Finding that the slide was fastened on the outside, he put forth all his giant strength to force it. Planting his feet upon the after end, he managed to keep his mouth out of the water and get a grip upon the hatch-carline. Then he strained away to burst the lock.

In the little bubble of compressed air the exertion caused him to pant for breath. He must hurry. The wood creaked dully. A jet of water spurted in his face. The slide was giving way, letting in the ocean from the outside, and in another moment the remaining space of air would be gone. With one tremendous shove he tore the carline loose. Then he clutched frantically at the splintering wood, and as the water closed over him he wrenched the slide loose and drove himself blindly through the opening. The next instant he shot upward, and in a moment he saw the light above. He came to the surface under the sloop's port quarter, bursting into the sunshine with a loud splash.

The captain heard the noise and hurried over to look. The mate's black head was just a fathom below him, and he quickly dropped him a line. Then willing hands



"THE GIANT BLACK STOOD GAZING OUT TO SEA, TRYING TO REALIZE WHAT HAD HAPPENED"

reached over and he was dragged on deck. He had been below nearly a quarter of an hour.

Staggering like a drunken man the great mate lounged forward, his bloodshot eyes distended, and his breath coming in loud rasping gasps, a little thin trickle of blood running from his nose and mingling with the salt water pouring down his face. Men seized him and tried to hold him up, but he plunged headlong upon the deck and lay still.

It was nearly half an hour later before he opened his eyes and looked about him. All hands were around him, some rubbing his huge limbs and others standing looking on, waiting to do what the captain might direct. Then he came slowly to and rose unsteadily to his feet. There was a feeling of relief and the men talked. The captain asked questions and plied his mate with whisky.

The giant black stood gazing out to sea, trying to realize what had happened, and while he looked he saw a thin trail of smoke rising upon the southern horizon. He pointed to it without saying anything, and all hands saw it and stopped in their work to stare.

"It 's the wreckin' tug from Key West," said the captain. "No more divin' to-day. Jest our bloomin' luck. Nothin' to hinder us from doin' a bit o' bizness. No danged shurks nor nothin' to stop a man, an' here we lose our chance."

"I reckon it 's all right, cap'n," said the big mate, speaking for the first time. "I done quit divin' fer this season, ennyways. N' when I says I smells shurk, I means *shurk*. N' the fust man what begs me toe go under ag'in when I says that, I gwine toe break his haid."

SKEEZICKS

BY

GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER

AUTHOR OF "BARGAIN DAY AT TUTT HOUSE"

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY

DOES Master Charles Edward Freeman, Esquire, live here?" politely asked Uncle Joe, pausing in mock hesitation.

The small boy on the gate-post, who had been idly drumming his heels against the smooth wood, at once checked back his smile of greeting, ready for any amount of serious pretense.

"Yes, sir," he answered, with equally grave courtesy.

"And is the gentleman at home?" Uncle Joe was anxious to know.

"No, sir," replied the boy, not even the suspicion of a twinkle in his inscrutable eyes.

"No?" inquired the young man in surprise. "It 's really too bad that he is away, for I wished to see him on rather particular business *not* unconnected with chocolate creams. Please tell him that I called, will you?" And Uncle Joe slowly moved on.

That broke the combination.

"Uncle Joe!" cried an eager voice, childish this time and quite unlike the one that had been used up to this point. "Come back, Uncle Joe! *I 'm* Charles Edward Freeman, but really and truly I 'm not at home, you know, because I 'm right here on the gate-post." This with a gleeful laugh.

Uncle Joe returned, but unconvinced.

"You don't mean to claim that *you* are Master Charles Edward Freeman, Esquire, do you?" he demanded.

"Yes, sir." The boy was again gravity itself.

"Nonsense! Why it 's quite impossible. Charles Edward Freeman is a regular six-foot-two name, with a plug-hat and a cane

"holding her left hand in such a fashion that he could not fail to note at once the glittering ring upon the third finger"

and other trimmings. I'm certain you 're not six foot two. Jump down here and let me measure you."

He drew a small tape-measure from his vest pocket, and the boy promptly climbed down.

"Three feet and eight inches," sternly announced Uncle Joe, letting the tape fly back into its silver case with a snap. "And yet you have the audacity, the contumacious audacity, I might say, to claim a full six-foot-two name !"

The youngster never so much as blinked. He had been raised among "grown ups," and he had a vocabulary that made strangers

Drawn by Howard Chandler Christy

"'YOU'RE THE VERY, VERY FIRST ONE OF ALL MY BEAUS TO COME AND BID ME GOOD-BY'"

gasp and look twice. Uncle Joe was an especial favorite because he always had such a gaudy assortment of language — then, in addition, he nearly always meant something different from what he said, which added the zest of uncertainty to the talk. Uncle Joe could "pretend like" so well, too, much better than any of the children he knew; moreover, he never patted a boy on the head with a heavy hand and called him "little man," in a ridiculous tone intended to be sprightly and particularly adapted to children and imbeciles. Oh, Uncle Joe was all right!

The boy was just repeating the beautiful phrase "contumacious audacity" over and over to himself, when the other whipped out a little memorandum book and turned over the leaves with careful ostentation.

"Now, let 's see what your name really is," resumed the young man, consulting a table of postage rates. "If you were an even three feet, according to these tables made and provided, your name would have to be Absalom; three feet one inch, Jehosophat; three feet two, Billy; three feet three, Cassius; four, Nero; five, Freckles; six, Johnny; seven, Beeswax — Here you are! Three feet and eight inches, *Skeezicks*. That 's your name — Skeezicks!"

"Aw-w-w-w-w! It ain't!" protested the boy with a sheepish grin.

"It surely is," insisted his uncle, slapping the book shut and popping it back in his pocket. "You 're three feet eight, are you not? You don't mean to dispute my measurement, I hope?"

"N-o-o-o-o."

"And you saw me consult the book? Well, your name 's Skeezicks, and that 's all there is to it. Now about this little matter of business, Skeezicks. You don't know of any one in this neighborhood who happens to like chocolate creams, do you?"

Skeezicks expectantly opined that he did.

"You do? That 's lucky, because I have a small supply of them I 'd like to dispose of before they spoil on my hands. Now to whom would you advise me to —— "

There are limits to all things. When there was nothing of vast importance at stake it was all very well to spend the time in airy persiflage, but when there was candy in question time had a distinct value, so Skeezicks cut the discussion short by diving into the pocket that showed a promising bulge, and capturing a paper bag of the coveted sweets. The small boy part of his nature was in full evidence now. He darted away in gleeful triumph and, at a safe distance, executed an impromptu war-dance and laughed in whoops, to the exceeding joy of Uncle Joe.

One morsel had gone the way of all chocolate creams and another was facing annihilation, when the boy, catching sight of a familiar figure, suddenly dashed off up the sidewalk and presently came back, clinging affectionately to the skirts of a smiling, bright-eyed young lady who was also nibbling one of the creams.

Mr. Joseph Freeman approved mightily of that group. His small nephew, he reflected, had splendid taste, but he did not, could not, appreciate the privilege of his years. He himself, for instance, would have liked very much to walk on the other side of Miss Elizabeth Elzner, and twine his arm around her in that same familiar way. He rather felt that between Skeezicks and himself, she would be very well taken care of.

"This beau of mine has just been telling me that he has a new name," laughed the young lady as she approached, "and he is not quite sure that he likes it. He wants to know my opinion."

"I hope that you will approve of it," replied Uncle Joe with deep gravity, "because there is really no way out of it for him. I measured him accurately, and he is just three feet and eight inches in height. Accordingly, by the rule of three, trigonometry and the Book of Standard Noms de Urchin, his name should be, must be, and is, Skeezicks, from the which there is no appeal or recourse, world without end, ad infinitum."

He addressed the most of this, quite impressively, to his nephew, but he was very much gratified, nevertheless, to hear a laugh of merry appreciation from Miss Elzner.

"It sounds so very convincing that I suppose it must be correct, Skeezicks," she said. "I 'm quite curious to know what my name ought to be at five feet four."

A whole long list of rather silly terms, endearments that would look altogether foolish in cold print, flashed into his mind in reply, but he promptly bit them off and swallowed them as they tried to slide off the end of his tongue. Instead, he judicially asked:

"Is that your *exact* height?"

"I always stretch up a little to bring it to that," she gaily confessed.

"I thought so," he replied quickly, with a swift estimate of her from plume to patent-leather tips and back that made her feel just a wee bit pink. "Had you been full five feet four, you would have been entitled merely to the sedate 'Elizabeth' which you sign to your notes of acceptance and the like. That fraction of an inch under, however, allows you the use of all the pretty diminutives, of which 'Elizabeth,' I think, has more than any other feminine name. The German is especially rich in them. There is 'Elizabetcha,' 'Lieschbet,' 'Lieschen,' and 'Lieschel,' to say nothing of the Northern 'Liezel,' the Southern 'Lizette,' and the quaintly pretty English 'Beth.'"

There was a certain suggestion of tender intonation in his voice as he ran over these diminutives, and that pink feeling in her face deepened.

"To say nothing, also, of 'Eliza' and 'Lizzie' and 'Betsy' and 'Betty,'" she laughingly mocked, as she tried to drive back the warm flush that she felt suffusing her cheeks.

"Scarcely those," he corrected. "They belong to the fraction over the even inch — as I can prove by the book."

"Never mind," she laughed. "I have n't time for it just now, but you may bring your little book over to the house this evening, if you like. I am going away to-morrow, you know, in place of next week." His sudden look of dismay made her hurry on with more information, to keep him from blurting out an answer without time for thought. She was slightly nervous about it, too, and she glanced apprehensively at Skeezicks. She need not have worried about that particular "little pitcher." He was stolidly munching chocolate creams. "Father just telegraphed me this morning," she continued, "to join him to-morrow in New York. The steamer sails the next day. Something or other has changed his plans. I at once telephoned all my friends, but you were not in your office at the time."

"And are you going away so soon?" he began in such tragic tone that she had to interrupt him in self-protection.

"Not until to-morrow," she cheerily reminded him. "In the meantime I must run down to that funny little store on the corner and have my farewell glance at the delightfully polite patriarch who runs it. I want to make one more guess as to whether Mr. Adomson is a page out of the 'Arabian Nights' or the 'Rubaiyat,' and as an excuse I am to buy a paper of pins for Nell."

"You 'll need help to carry back all those purchases," he eagerly suggested. "Remember that our Hebrew friend has no delivery wagon."

"I 'll hire a boy if I need one," she assured him. "You must stay just where you 're put this once. If I should let you go along we would waste ever so much time — you remember how Nell had to send after us when we went for the ice-cream, don't you, and it was just milk when we got home? Well, I have to pack up, and I won't trust you. Good-by, Skeezicks. You must come up and see me some time to-day."

Stooping down to give the boy a kiss, she tripped away.

"Gracious!" she said to herself, with a return of the pink feeling and a deep breath — for she had jabbered her tongue stiff to keep him from arguing his company upon her. "If I had let him come along with me he would have said it all right here on the street. I could see it in his eye."

Uncle Joe picked up his small nephew and set him back on the gate-post, where he regarded the youngster with speculative envy.

"Skeezicks, you have n't any idea of how beatified you have been," he remarked. "Now have you?"

Skeezicks, critically observing the line of cleavage in a half-eaten chocolate, s'posed not.

"Why, think of it! A young lady, a bright, pretty, good, sweet young lady — about the nicest young lady in the whole wide world, in fact — comes along the street and kisses you smack on the cheek, without your ever having asked her to do it, and yet you can go right along eating chocolate creams. Chocolate creams! Monstrous!"

Skeezicks remarked that the chocolate creams were good, and took another one.

"Blind, blind ignorance!" protested his uncle. "Er — by the way, young man, you have no serious intentions regarding that young lady, I hope. You 're not going to marry her, are you?"

Skeezicks devoted some serious thought to this question.

"Maybe," he finally confessed. "Either her or mama."

"Marriage is a tremendous responsibility, boy," Uncle Joe solemnly warned. "The expense alone is something frightful, they

tell me. You want to be well supplied with money before you think of matrimony."

"I 've got a whole lot of money in my bank." It was said with modest enough pride — not at all boastful — though it set the boy to drumming his bare heels complacently against the gate-post again.

"You have? You would n't mind lending some of it to me, would you — with good interest and security?"

"You may have it all," was the prompt offer, though an inward sigh went with it. He was already making calculations for Christmas.

"Oh, no! I could n't think of taking it all. About a hundred and seventy-five dollars will do me, if you 'll just run right in and get it, please."

Skeezicks paused and caught his breath.

"That 's lots more than eighty-four cents, I guess, ain't it?"

"A couple of mere bagatelles or so more, so I guess you may keep your money, after all. I 've got enough anyway, come to think of it. You see, I was figuring on buying a ring for the young lady who just passed us. I think a diamond ring would look about right on her pretty hand, don't you? The trouble is that I don't know yet whether she would like to have me give her one. Now, if she had kissed me as she did you, I would know just what to do. I 'd very gladly buy her a diamond ring, so quickly that I 'd burn holes in the sidewalk getting to the store. Then she would never kiss any one else. That 's the rule, you know, and young folks have to mind the rules. By the way, I did n't notice any diamond ring on the third finger of Miss Elzner's left hand, did you?"

Skeezicks had not.

"She ought to have one then," declared Uncle Joe with profound conviction, but just then his brow clouded over. He had been stretching out the conversation with Skeezicks for a sly purpose of his own, but now he was sorry. Miss Elzner had started back from the store, it was true, but Mr. Arthur Duncan was walking with her and talking with entirely unnecessary earnestness. When the couple passed by, the young men bowed with such cordiality as they might, considering that Mr. Freeman would much rather have choked Mr. Duncan, and that the latter young gentleman always bowed from his hips only, having long since forgotten how to bend his neck. That's the sort of young man he was. Miss Elzner shot at Uncle Joe a look of amused self-pity, or at least he thought so, and playfully shook her tiny package. She was carrying the pins herself, which he regarded as a favorable omen.

"I don't like that young fellow, Skeezicks!" he presently exclaimed. "Do you?"

Skeezicks had no valid personal reason for hating the young man in question, but if Uncle Joe did, *he* did, and he said so.

"Right you are, Skeezicks Freeman! He laces too tightly. He 's all laid out with a rule and compass, and he 's afraid to move for fear he 'll spoil the pattern. Moreover, he 's a selfish and unprincipled young icicle who wants entirely too much to suit you and me." And Uncle Joe went in to get ready for lunch.

Left to himself, Skeezicks counted his chocolates. There were just seven left. He would eat one and save the others until after lunch, as he had so often been told to do with his sweets. To keep his mind from dwelling on the six pieces of candy in the bag he fell to reviewing all the interesting things that had lately happened to him. Miss Elzner and her ringless finger held his attention the longest. He liked her. Maybe his mother would be too old, after all, for him to marry when he grew up. He had noticed Miss Elzner's hands as she came back from the store. There was not a single ring on any one of her beautiful white fingers. *How* did she always manage to keep her hands so clean?

She had kissed him. According to Uncle Joe he ought to buy her a ring, and then she would never let any one else have that privilege. He turned this over and over in his mind. He had never before contemplated the exclusive ownership of a complete and unbroken set of kisses, but the idea was fairly attractive, as a novelty at least. She would surely be delighted to have a ring. He knew where there were some for sale. Right down at the corner store.

Skeezicks stopped in horror! He suddenly realized that he was absent-mindedly eating the very last one of the six chocolates that he had meant to save! He wriggled down from the gate-post and went penitently in to lunch, and contrition so weighed upon his soul, even after confession, that he was silent all through the meal. They even had to call him back to the table for dessert, and his mother thereupon became anxious lest he was sick.

Uncle Joe kindly stepped into the breach. He stated that Skeezicks had grave problems

on his mind and should not be disturbed: that he had been kissed by a marvelously pretty young lady, and had thoughts of matrimony. It was quite soberly and respectfully said and Skeezicks was hurt that, as usual, when his weightiest affairs were mentioned, they were heartlessly laughing! He paused at the door to protest, but it seemed, after all, that they were laughing at Uncle Joe, who was red-faced about something or other, and he went on about his own important affairs.

On the mantel in his room was a toy bank. It was his own, and the money in it was his to do with as he pleased, and no questions asked. This was part of the Freeman idea for The Training of Future Captains of Finance, and whether it was a good plan or not is for the Freemans to find out. It 's none of our present business.

The bank was of plate steel, and guaranteed to be absolutely impregnable. There was no way in the world to open it, without an ax, until it was full to the very top. Skeezicks took it down on the floor, inserted the blade of a nail file in a much scratched crack, gave a deft wrench, and looted the affair — stripped it of every penny with as much ease as impregnable national banks are cleaned out.

Taking his eighty-four cents, Skeezicks hurried down to the corner store where the scholarly Mr. Adomson, one time of Constantinople; moved his hand automatically to the show-case containing the penny candies.

"I 've come to buy a ring," stated Skeezicks.

Mr. Adomson removed his hand from the candy show-case, and with the same motion executed an impressive flourish that was at once a welcome, a laying of his life and fortune before the feet of the patron, and a token of exact and explicit obedience to command.

"It is yours immediate, little Sir," said the benevolent Mr. Adomson, whose English, learned from books between periods of being bastinadoed for his money, was as florid and surprising as his stock. "In profusion I have them, and for a simple penny you shall make choosing."

With a lordly hand Skeezicks waved away the assortment of twisted wire and gaudy lumps of glass. With the other hand he dumped his eighty-four cents on the counter, standing on tiptoes to do it.

"I want a really ring for all my money," he announced, with another lordly wave. In obedience to the wave Mr. Adomson unconsciously bowed low and spread wide his hands, for all the world like a merchant of hoary Bagdad or Balsora, then he leaned over the counter to peer down at his small customer in perplexity. Skeezicks had always rather puzzled him in the matter of age. Size alone classed him among the other small boys of that neighborhood.

Gradually the idea of a stupendous joke crept into Mr. Adomson's usually sober mind.

"You shall have arrive to the getting married, perhaps, eh?" he suggested with a slowly expanding smile.

"Yes, sir," replied Skeezicks, in a matter-of-fact manner that froze the smile just where it was, and left it looking lonesome and strangely out of place beneath the perplexed eyes, like a clown at a funeral. Mr. Adomson at last shook himself as if from sleep, sighed heavily, and started for the tiny show-window. Twice on the way he looked doubtfully back, but Skeezicks was still there, waiting in patient expectancy, with no sign about him of presently fading away like the creature of a dream. His bare, brown legs were especially material and reassuring.

A small, plush tray was deferentially set before the boy, and in it reposed half a dozen showy rings, close imitations, in cheap materials, of the genuine articles.

"Diamonds and sapphires and rubies and emeralds." murmured Mr. Adomson, with just a hint of Oriental submissiveness, and the merest trace of Hebraic slurring of the hard consonants. Back from the old days came the memory of southern sunlight on flashing gems, and even in spite of his five years of tussle with democratic America, in Skeezicks he dimly recognized a member of the heaven-born class. Skeezicks unconsciously had the air. For one fleeting moment Mr. Adomson had permitted his opulent imagination to look upon these gauds as real, precious even of their kind, rare, worthy of a sultan's notice, and it was with a sigh of reluctance that he now named the brutal price.

"For seventy-five cents, little Sir, you shall make of these gems a choosing."

Skeezicks made his choice with no hesitation whatever. He knew what diamonds were. He picked out a ring and handed it to Mr. Adomson with the manner of an easy master, quick reflex of the patriarch's own humility.

"You may wrap up that one, please," he directed, with a perfect mimicry of his mother's shopping voice.

Mr. Adomson turned doubtfully to his shelves. A sudden inspiration came to him. Among cheap handkerchiefs, scratchy red mittens and Tam O'Shanters, loud hosiery, tawdry laces, flimsy underwear, flaming ties, and all the other poor finery of his shelves, he pawed and rummaged until he found an old, fly-specked, dusty ring-box, yellow with age but lined with ragged plush, and in this, after awkwardly futile attempts to clean it, he placed the ring. It really looked quite respectable, and the old merchant felt a thrill of pride as he turned to deliver the package.

He started as his eyes again fell upon his diminutive customer, with the prosaic bare legs. For a moment, once more he had been waiting upon a grandee, in his wee shop under an awning on far shores.

"Your people," he suggested doubtfully. withholding the package. "They should be unpleased, perhaps, eh?"

"No, sir," Skeezicks replied confidently, his two eyes as vouchers to his truthfulness. "That 's my own money to spend."

Mr. Adomson slowly handed over the ring. The small purchaser was dancing happily out of the door when the other called him back for change. Skeezicks took the money with a nonchalance learned from his Uncle Joe, and gravely pressed a penny in the hand of Mr. Adomson as a tip, an action reminiscent of delightful luncheons in the city with the men of his family. He slipped the eight cents in his pocket and went out. The old merchant followed him, and dumbly watched the boy out of sight, rather disappointed, and yet relieved, to note that the bare legs twinkled in the sunlight like those of any other small boy. Presently he sighed, shrugged his shoulders, turned his palms to the world, and took his rippling white hair and beard within doors — where he put the penny carefully away by itself.

Miss Elzner was packing up when Skeezicks called to see her, and they brought him right up to her room.

"You 're the very, very first one of all my beaus to come and bid me good-by," she told him as she set him up on a trunk, "and you shall have the privilege of seeing me pack away all my pretty dresses."

"Yes ma'am," said Skeezicks, absently, and he sat very still, thinking, while she bustled about the room. Presently she was startled, on looking down, to find him at her side, mutely holding up the ring in its nest of dull red.

"Why, you dear little Skeezicks chap, what 's this?" she asked, startled until she noted that the clumsy "gem" was of glass.

"It 's a ring, because you kissed me," he explained. "I bought it for you to wear on — I forget what finger it is — you know, don't you?"

Miss Elzner sat down. For a moment she struggled with a rising inclination to shriek with laughter, but her sympathies were too quick and too tender to allow her to make this mistake. Instead, quickly seeing the Skeezicks point of view, she drew him impulsively on her lap, and snuggled him up comfortably to her.

"It is such a beautiful ring, and a still more beautiful idea," she said, sincerely affected now that the ludicrous shock of it all had passed away. "Did you buy it with your own money?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Skeezicks proudly. "And I've got eight cents left. Why don't you put it on?"

She laughed lightly, and held out her engagement finger.

"That 's for you to do," she told him, and the boy slipped the ring to place with huge complacency, then admiringly smoothed the tapering fingers.

"You just must wash your hands most all the time," he observed, rather pityingly. "Uncle Joe thinks your hands are awfully nice."

"Nonsense," gasped the young woman, turning crimson.

"Yes, ma'am. He said he 'd like to buy you a diamond ring himself, only he did n't know yet whether you 'd want him to give it to you or not. He said that if you had kissed him like you did me, he 'd go and buy you a ring right away. Then you 'd never kiss anybody else. You won't, will you? Only, of course, I don't care if you kiss Uncle Joe." He looked up inquiringly. "Why, how red your face is!" he exclaimed. "Have you got a fever?"

She laughed and hid her cheek on his curls so that he might not gaze so wonderingly at them, nor marvel at the flame in her eyes. She had guessed at Uncle Joe's secret all along, but she was surprised to find how tremulously happy it made her to be told of it. She knew, too, how innocently but sincerely the subject had been talked over between

these two chums — the young man and the boy. It was for his whimsical gentleness with this child that she had first come to set him apart from his fellows in her regard. And she was glad, glad, glad! Suddenly she caught the boy to her and kissed him rapturously.

Skeezicks wriggled uncomfortably.

"Oh, did I hurt you?" she contritely exclaimed.

"Not much," he manfully assured her. The ribs on his right side fairly ached, and he drew a painfully deep breath as she released him.

On the way home, a bright dollar in his pocket for a "keepsake," Skeezicks was beset by a troubled thought. He was delighted with what he had done, and eager to tell his mother and his Uncle Joe, but the last Sunday-school text arose to deter him. "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth," had been the lesson, and it had been carefully explained that when he had done a good deed he must not go about bragging of it. Well, he had surely done a good deed, he knew, else he could not have made Miss Elzner so happy. Reluctantly he concluded to say nothing about it.

All that afternoon Miss Elzner went about her work humming little fragments of light-hearted tunes, and occasionally looking at her shining new ring. She was only to be gone three months, after all. She was glad, though, that it was no longer. Half a dozen times she was interrupted by callers, and each time she slipped off the ring, only to replace it when she went back up-stairs. She valued that ring very highly, and enjoyed wearing it where no one could see.

Mr. Joseph Freeman was a very early caller that evening but, early as he was, two of her girl friends were there before him, and before they left others came. It was an hour, nearly, before he could get a moment alone with her, but the hour was busily improved. He was rehearsing and memorizing a very neat little speech that had occurred to him on the way over. He had never been at a loss for words in his life, and he had no doubt that he should acquit himself well in this case.

At last they were alone. She came back from seeing two of her friends to the door and, as she swept into the room, he determinedly advanced and held out his hand.

"I thought I should never get to talk with you," he impetuously began, bent on settling the affair with half a dozen well-chosen words. "I simply had to get a word alone with you before you went away, and I suppose you will have other callers at almost any moment. It is the penalty you must pay for achieving so much popularity — for being yourself, in fact. I never knew any one who could make such a host of warm friends with so little effort. And your friends are all such a splendid sort, too."

Hang it all, this was n't what he had meant to say in such a hurry! He had nerved himself nicely to make his little speech, but somehow or other he had mislaid the words. He had almost an instinct to search in his pockets for them. She was saying something or other about her good friends, but he scarcely understood her. His knees had become a trifle shaky. Confound it! He stared hard at the clock, and then at a big arm-chair for inspiration. How bright were her eyes and how tender the curve of her tremulously smiling lips. He became aware, by a slight tugging, that he was still holding her hand. He had to say something or other and that very quickly.

"What time does your train leave?"

And *that* was what he said!

"At eleven-forty," she told him, gently disengaging her hand. The pose had become awkward. He reached forward with a mechanical impulse to overtake the hand, but let it get away from him.

"You don't know how we shall miss you," he began again, taking fresh and desperate courage. "I shall miss you so very much." This was a much better beginning. His case looked promising now. He himself was ready to go right on with his more important remarks — but his assinine tongue kept on wagging, merely from momentum, and said: "Jim and your sister Nellie will miss you, also. My sister-in-law will particularly miss you. She is very fond of you. Everybody will miss you."

His eye, roving in distress for relief from his imbecile tongue, strayed to the unsympathetic face of the clock, to the freak lion head carved on the back of the big chair, to the tiara in Miss Elzner's hair, and, carefully avoiding the brilliant eyes, dropped to her hands caught by a flash from a tiny object on the third finger of her left hand, then, with sudden, pupil-widening comprehension, came to startled rest.

His embarrassment left him in an instant. He stiffened and paled. She noted the sudden change and, looking down, saw that ring on her finger — Skeezicks's "engagement" ring. She had forgotten to remove it this time, in the hurry of packing, and the whole miserable situation flashed upon her and turned her faint. With panic-stricken instinct she swung her hand into the folds of her dress, and realized as she did so that even this natural movement would be misunderstood — as it was.

She could not explain. To deny that this was a "really" engagement ring would show an apparent anxiety to have him understand that she was free to listen to a proposal. To tell how she came by it — even if she carried it off laughingly — would present the same idea in a highly intensified form. Her face reddened at the thought, and that, too, was misinterpreted.

Duncan had proposed and had been accepted that afternoon, he was sure of that, and she had hoped to be far away when he found it out. She had led him on most cruelly, and she was a bit ashamed of it. She ought to be. At least she might have spared him the misery of making such a silly spectacle of himself as he had just done. But why should he expect to find consideration in a deliberate coquette?

"I dropped in to express my regret at your hasty departure, and to say how sorry I am that a business appointment will prevent me from going down to your train in the morning," he found himself saying, quite steadily. "It is too bad for us all to give up the jolly affairs your sister had planned for this last week before your trip abroad, but you will probably be much more than compensated by the delightful experiences in store for you. I wish you a pleasant journey, and all the happiness in the world afterwards, I am sure," he concluded, with no trace of a tremor in his firm, even voice. "Good-by."

She took the proffered hand.

"Good-by," she faltered — she could not quite make her voice as indifferent as it ought, in maiden modesty, to be — and he was gone.

Out in the hall Mr. Freeman met Mr. Duncan coming in. Mr. Duncan bent himself slightly to Mr. Freeman. Mr. Freeman nodded slightly to Mr. Duncan. Mr. Freeman slammed the gate after him. Mr. Duncan measured his precise footsteps into the drawing-room, to find there a young lady with a most vivacious exterior holding her left hand in such a fashion that he could not fail to note at once the glittering ring upon the third finger. She took a vixenish delight in flashing that worthless bauble in the light, in toying with it, turning it around and around on her finger, and in making no explanation; and all the while she chatted with a gaiety that would have been suspicious to a young man less painfully occupied. When Mr. Duncan left, after the most disagreeable half-hour that he had ever spent in his life, he had at last found a joint in his neck. His head drooped a little.

It would be a contemptible trick to follow Miss Elzner as she flies up the stairs, to invade the privacy of her room, and stare as she throws herself face downward on the bed and gives way to a torrent of sobs, and we are not going to do it. We have some sense of decency and delicacy, I hope, you and I.

The noon whistles were blowing down in the city next day as Mr. Joseph Freeman walked slowly up the street, and the sound reminded him that a certain train was already speeding on its way to New York, bearing about a hundred and thirty pounds of precious freight in which he had no interest whatsoever. So, why should he be thinking of the parcel, he impatiently asked himself, then he went on thinking about it more than ever.

In this suburb were wide, shady sidewalks and broad green lawns, and little birds warbled and chirped in the branches of the trees all summer long. Mr. Freeman, however, had no eye for shady paths and grassy swards, no ears for the chirp of fool birds, or the plash of fountains, or the soft rustle of leaves. His abstraction was so deep, in fact, that he never noticed a man awaiting him in front of the little notion store on the corner, nor heard the sound of the man's voice, until he was plucked by the sleeve, when, looking sharply around, he found himself face to face with the venerable Mr. Adomson, above whose flowing beard there rested a troubled expression.

"I shall beg your very excellent pardon, sir," ventured Mr. Adomson, deferentially wagging his beard three separate times. "The small young man, now, the little Sir, so frequently that you have with you, eh?"

"Oh, yes; my nephew. What of him? Is he hurt?"

"Not so, praised be Jehovah!" answered the other sincerely, turning those wonderfully expressive palms devoutly to the sky "But the ring, you should know, eh? It is not that I beseech him to buy, and if he will bring it back I will give him the seventy-five cents with the honor of my heart."

Mr. Adomson's bow as he said this was marvelous for its finish, suggesting in a sweep of twelve inches a prostration that would have spread his beard upon the ground.

"The ring!" repeated Mr. Freeman in perplexity. "What ring?"

"Alas, I most truly feared that the people of the little Sir were unknowing of the business, and my soul is heavy," sighed the other. "Never would I have myself misdoubt as a coaxer of little children to spend their moneys. It was a mere bauble, a pretend-to-be diamond, and he said, with such grand beauty of his little ways, that it should be the getting married ring for his to-be bride. Like this was the bauble."

The worried merchant, having all his properties ready, even to the seventy-five cents clinking in his hand, drew from his pocket the mate to the ring that Skeezicks had bought. The effect on Mr. Joseph Freeman was striking and instantaneous, but not quite what Mr. Adomson had expected.

"By George!" vigorously blurted the young man, looking at the ring in startled comprehension for one fleeting moment, then he wheeled and dashed off up the sidewalk, leaving the thoroughly astonished Jew with the ring still extended in his right hand, his left unconsciously stroking his beard.

"With what tumultuous haste do these men of United States execute," he marveled, and withdrew into his little shop where things were more readily understood.

Uncle Joe dashed into the house and grabbed Skeezicks away from the washbasin, where, under strict supervision, he was preparing for lunch. The boy could never be taught to really enjoy washing his face and hands.

"Charley, did you buy Miss Elzner a ring yesterday?" he demanded, with an eagerness that was almost fierce.

Startled and shocked, the boy could not answer. A big lump sprang up under his palate and choked him. Something was wrong, he saw that, but it was not in the boy to lie. He made manful efforts, white-faced and terror-stricken by the suddenness and intenseness of it all, to swallow that painful lump in his throat, but at last had to express himself by a nod, and braced himself to meet the dreadful accusation that he knew must be forthcoming, though he could not imagine what it might be.

In place of scolding him, however, Uncle Joe sat down in a chair and laughed until the tears streamed down his face, and then the lump broke for Skeezics and he threw himself in his mother's lap, sobbing and crying in a nervous paroxysm of relief. As long as he was accused he could hold out with the fortitude of an Indian under torture, but now that the pressure was removed he gave way to his grief with an abandon that made his mother glare at her luckless brother-in-law with scorn unutterable.

"Never mind, Grace," he said, apologizing abjectly to the glare. "I 'll make it all right with the boy, but you see it was a life and death case." He took his nephew in his big arms, and whispered nonsensical things in his ear until he had the youngster laughing in spite of himself, then he put Skeezicks up on the mantel shelf and cross-examined him.

"Now, tell me all about it, Charley," he said, looking at his watch.

"You said my name was Skeezicks," protested the boy, stifling a stray sob and wiping away a left-over tear.

"That 's so. Well then, Mr. Charles Edward Skeezicks Freeman, Esquire, how did you come to buy my girl a ring?"

"She 's my girl," corrected Skeezicks. "She kissed me."

"Well, I 'll be — be shirred, gored, and basted!" muttered Uncle Joe. "Go on Skeezicks. What then? Laugh all you like, Grace."

Mrs. Freeman, her animosity forgotten and her eyes sparkling with the joy of romance, was snickering.

"So I bought her a diamond ring, like you said, so she would n't ever kiss anybody else — Mr. Duncan or anybody like that, you know. Only I told her I did n't care if she kissed you."

Peals of laughter from Mrs. Freeman interrupted the interview, but Uncle Joe, not to be turned aside by ridicule, doggedly asked for more.

"I told her what you said," continued Skeezicks, "about how you 'd like to get her a ring if she would kiss you that way, only you did n't know yet whether she 'd want you to,

and I told her how pretty you said her hands were, and she let me put the ring on her finger, my own self."

Skeezicks stopped this time to laugh with his mother. He did n't exactly know where the fun came in, but a chance for a good laugh was not to be lightly passed over.

"Go right ahead, Grace. Enjoy yourself," continued Mr. Freeman with a sheepish grin, but giving his watch a businesslike snap as he consulted it again. "And what did Miss Elzner say? That 's the important part and if it 's a good joke I can't help it."

"Well, she did n't say hardly anything," drawled Skeezicks after an effort of memory, "but she squeezed me till my side hurt, and she wore the ring, and I know she thought it was nice because I saw her kiss it. Was n't that all right, Uncle Joe?"

"Skeezicks, it was great!" he commented, and turned to find his sister-in-law holding her aching side, and holding out the other hand to him in sincere congratulation, even though she was still shrieking with laughter. He looked at his watch again, gave Skeezicks an affectionate hug, and put on his hat.

"Where are you going, lucky boy?" protested Mrs. Freeman with housewifely concern. "Lunch is ready and it will get all cold."

"Lunch!" he exclaimed, pausing in the doorway. "Lunch! Why, Grace, the next train for New York leaves in less than an hour, and I have n't time even to dress. I have n't time for anything."

But he had. He found time to rush over to the telegraph office at the depot and forge the following welcome telegram to Miss Elzner:

"Uncle Joe coming on next train. Wants to trade rings.

SKEEZICKS."

THE LITTLE SOUL

BY

ANITA FITCH

O LITTLE Soul, come in, come in!
The April rain is cold,
And all the stories that I know
Have never yet been told.

If Thou but come, I 'll place Thy bed
So close to mine again,
Thou shalt not hear the fearsome bough
That knocks against the pane.

Come for an hour, pray God the boon,
('T is such a little thing!)
And I shall sing Thee prettier songs
Than those the angels sing.

For if they sing of wondrous things,
And sing the whole day through,
They know not all the things we know—
That lie between us two.

Come for an hour, and all Thy face
So tenderly I 'll kiss,
The kisses God must give to Thee
Thou 'lt never, never, miss.

IN LOCO PARENTIS

BY

MYRA KELLY

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE CITIZENS," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY

FREDERIC DORR STEELE

CINDERELLA had a Fairy-Godmother; Aladdin had a Wonderful Lamp; Isidore Belchatosky had an Uncle Abraham. Uncle Abraham combined the power of the genii with the complaisance of the godmother, and was further distinguished by a settled place of residence and a distracting generosity of cast-off clothes. The more purely mythical personages, with accounts of whose beneficence Miss Bailey was wont to entertain her charges, were not entirely convincing. Giants, genii, fairies, conversational animals might or might not be; but who could question the existence of Isidore's Uncle Abraham? Excerpts of his views upon men and events adorned Isidore Belchatosky's conversation and examples of his taste in "gents' furnishings" adorned Isidore Belchatosky's person.

The speckled vest which shrouded Isidore's form had once belonged to Uncle Abey. It was crossed by a steel watch chain, the gift of Uncle Abey. Its pocket waited — open-mouthed — for a fat and noisy watch, promised by Uncle Abey. The bold plaid trousers which reached from Isidore's ankles to his armpits, and showed so pleasingly through the opening of the speckled vest, had but lately graced the limbs of Uncle Abey.

"These is nicer nor that velvet suit you used to wear," said Patrick Brennan judiciously. "Them was sissy clothes."

"These is fer mans suits," Isidore proudly informed him. "I gets 'em from off of mine Uncle Abey. The lady by our floor she makes pants fer her little boy mit the legs, and I puts me on mit the rest."

"Your uncle could to be awful big," commented Morris Mogilewsky.

"Sure is he big."

"Is he high?"

"Sure is he high. Like a house is he high."

"Und fat?"

"He is fat like blocks from houses."

"Did you ever," asked Patrick, "see Father Burke over to St. Mary's? Is your uncle as fat as him?"

"Fatter," Isidore maintained. "Say, you open me the back of this waist und I shows you how is mine uncle fat."

Morris undid the buckle; Isidore removed safety-pins and shook out reefs until the vest hung, in voluminous folds, to its extinguished wearer's knees.

"Fill it up from coats," he commanded, "und you could to see how is mine Uncle Abey fat."

It was recess time. The yard was swarming with little boys, and the discrepancy in girth between Isidore and his uncle was soon overcome. Coats, caps, mufflers, even luncheons, were pressed into service, until Isidore, looking like the most backward tilted of pouter pigeons, turned to Patrick.

"Mine uncle is fat like that," said he. "I guess nobody in that world could to be fat how mine Uncle Abey is."

"You lie," cried Patrick Brennan. "No sheeny could be as fat as a priest."

"*You* lie," retorted Isidore; "mine Uncle Abey is."

Whereupon they fought. It was a little unfortunate that the bell should have rung just then and that the owners of Isidore's *embonpoints* should have forcibly and

hurriedly reclaimed it. For Patrick's science was upset by the alarming shrinkage of his opponent, while Isidore's aim and nerve were disturbed by frequent, even by simultaneous, tugs at his person. The relative avoirdupois of priest and Levite was still undetermined when a large monitor dragged the kicking combatants to Room 18, and delivered them to Miss Bailey, their long suffering teacher.

"Mine uncle is fatter," Isidore persisted, even when Miss Bailey had consigned him to the corner near the bookcase. "He 's fatter 'n blocks from houses und bunches from priests."

"Then why don't he come round?" taunted Patrick from durance vile under the desk. "Why don't he never come round?"

"He 's comin'," said Isidore, who knew that he was lying.

"You lie," said Patrick, who guessed it.

"Say, Teacher," cried Eva Gonorowsky, in whose care — for their greater debasement — these two rivals for her favor had been placed. "Teacher, Missis Bailey, Patrick und Izzie begins mit themselves some more. They says they lies."

"He *is* comin'," Isidore maintained.

And, strangely enough, he did emerge from the invisibility which had held him. Isidore's youth was leaving him. His seventh birthday was even then approaching, and Uncle Abraham craved — by formal note — Miss Bailey's permission to mark the flight of time by giving a party to the First Reader Class. The Principal was consulted; stipulated only that the celebration should take place after school hours; and Uncle Abraham was informed — by formal note — that Room 18 would be at his hospitable service at a quarter after three upon the anniversary of Isidore's nativity.

There never had been a more successful party. The guests all knew one another; there was neither embarrassment nor constraint; and the host, who arrived at the appointed hour in gleaming raiment and great heat, was observed by all observers to be a man of wealth and of importance. Also the refreshment promised well. It was contained in three dirty, moist, and enticing pails and several cardboard boxes. There was much pink string and a suggestion of festivity about them, and the First Reader Class was properly impressed.

"It's hoky poky," pronounced Sarah Schodsky whose word upon all social matters was law and final. "It 's hoky poky. A man by our block he sells it. You gets a awful little bit fer a penny. I seen how Ikey Borrachsohn buys some once."

"Cake costs money too, und candy," said Isidore. "On'y mine uncle he don't care. He 's got lots. He 's got kind feelin's over me too, und so he makes a party over mine birthday. Say, he 's awful rich."

"He 's stylish too," said Eva. "Ain't you seen how he makes all things what is polite mit Teacher? I never in my world seen how he is polite."

"'*Mine uncle is fat like that*'"

Neither had Miss Bailey. She was rather at a loss as to the means of entertaining so very impressive a guest, and the easy formality of his manner took her entirely by surprise. When, however, they had discussed Isidore's virtues and had together ministered to the fifty-six assembled and clamoring appetites, she found herself beginning to unstand the admiration in which Isidore held this precious relative. There was a dexterity in the turn of his wrist, a finish and precision about all he did, that seemed to promise great capacity, and the tender pride which shone in his eyes when he looked at or spoke of his small nephew showed that Isidore's love was not lavished in vain.

When the more carnal wants of the First Reader Class had been satisfied Uncle Abey turned his attention to the spirit.

"Will you let them sing?" he asked, and they sang selections from the class repertoire. Gradually the control of events passed from Miss Bailey's hands into Uncle Abey's, until Teacher sat at her own desk, the guest of Uncle Abraham, while he marshaled her own charges for her entertainment.

Under the spell of his persuasiveness the dazed Miss Bailey, who had delved in memory and music books for songs sufficiently simple to be learned and understood by her small people, listened to Sadie Gonorowsky's polished rendering of "Hello, Central, Give me Heaven," to Patrick Brennan's recitation of "Kelly at the Bat," to Morris Mogilewsky's interpretation of the classic, "She May Have Seen Better Days." At one stage of the symposium Uncle Abraham made a speech which, though it began with Isidore, soon wandered over to Miss Bailey and stayed there. Other songs and recitations followed, all well received, but perhaps the most popular number of the program was Eva Gonorowsky's singing, with appropriate gestures, of "The Hotel Windsor Fire." The audience was hanging spell-bound upon the voice of Yetta Aaronsohn when Teacher rose suddenly and announced that it was time to say good-by. One verse of Yetta's selection, whose refrain was "She 's More to be Pitied than Censured," had been quite enough for Miss Bailey.

As Isidore, still miles from the ground of common things, was being led home by a proud uncle, that relative turned to him and demanded:

"Who is that teacher what you 've got?"

"That 's Missis Bailey. Ain't she a nice teacher?"

"Nice!" repeated Uncle Abey. "She 's fine. All silk and a yard wide."

"Missis Blake is wider," Isidore was forced to admit, "but Missis Bailey is nicer. Ain't I tell you from long how she says all things what is nice over them clothes what you gives me."

"I 've got some more for you," announced the uncle. "You wear 'em to-morrow and tell her where you got 'em."

On the next morning Isidore, in incredible grandeur, presented Miss Bailey with a large magenta photograph album and Uncle Abraham's regards. And in the first enwreathed aperture for pictures there was a polished and edited version of Uncle Abraham's most bland expression. Decorously but sadly Miss Bailey returned the gift.

In the afternoon Isidore, with his morning's glory still upon him and a large and inflexible four-in-hand necktie added thereunto, presented Miss Bailey with a pair of impressive earrings dangling on a card. Decorously also, and sadly too, Miss Bailey returned them.

Uncle Abraham, surprised but not discouraged, made other attempts to guess Miss Bailey's taste in jewelry and love tokens until Isidore would have been, at almost any time, worthy of the attention of the Clinton Street gang. For always on his way to school he bore gifts proffered by Uncle Abraham, and always on his way from school he bore gifts rejected by Miss Bailey. And then Teacher wrote a short, polite, but clear statement of her wishes. She would allow Uncle Abraham to do as many kind and gracious things as he might choose for the First Reader Class but his generosity could not extend to its teacher. His nephew's classmates were quite ready to serve as objects of his beneficence. His nephew's teacher was not.

Uncle Abraham pondered heavily over this extraordinary sentiment, and Isidore watched his cogitations and repented that he had been the bearer of a letter which seemed to be distressing to the kindest of uncles and of men.

"Teacher ain't mad?" Uncle Abey asked.

"No. She has kind feelin's," Isidore assured him. "All times she says what is polite over that party."

"Then why don't she take the things I send her? Why don't she want diamonds and books and perfumery?"

The question was large, but Isidore grappled with it. After prayerful and long consideration he delivered himself of the opinion:

"I guess, maybe, she 's hungry. She don't needs she should wear somethings; she don't needs she should look on somethings; she don't needs even she should smell somethings. She needs she should eat."

"Gott!" said Uncle Abraham. "That 's fierce. We 'll have to have another party right away. An' I 'll have ice-cream and cake for you kids, but for her I 'll have something filling. Don't you suppose she gets enough to eat at home?"

"Gott!" said Uncle Abraham again. "We can't wait till July. She don't look healthy enough to last that long. We 'll have a party without a birthday."

But a party for no reason at all was, Miss Bailey informed her would-be provider, too grave an infringement of class routine to be permitted. The letter went on to say that Room 18 was very grateful; that Miss Bailey was very grateful and that she deeply regretted being obliged to interfere with Mr. Abrahamowsky's kind intentions.

Again Uncle Abraham fell to pondering upon the eternally incomprehensible feminine, but his reflections served only to

"'It's hoky poky,' pronounced Sarah Schodsky whose word upon all social matters was law and final"

"Well," said Isidore, "she ain't so awful big und she ain't so awful fat. She 's skinny. She says all times how you is nice und fat. She says she ain't never seen no clothes what is big like yours is."

"Then we 'll have that party right away," said Uncle Abraham.

"But I ain't got no more birthdays," Isidore objected. "You can't have a party 'out no birthday."

"She 's *got* to have something to eat. She 's *got* to have a party. You ask her when her birthday is."

Isidore asked and crestfallenly reported that Teacher would remain at her present years until July. "Und in July there ain't no school und in the school there ain't no birthdays."

increase his bewilderment. Nor were Isidore's reports cheering. Whether the thought were father to the observation or whether the long confinement and insufficient ventilation were having their natural effect upon Constance Bailey's not too hardy frame is uncertain. But certain it is that Isidore met his uncle's constant queries with:

"She don't looks healthy. She is awful white on the face."

There were days during January when Miss Bailey deserted Room 18 and a substitute reigned in her stead. But not peacefully and never — willingly — twice. Then would Isidore report to his anxious uncle:

"We did n't have no teacher to-day. We had a substiteacher, und Patrick Brennan says cheek on her. So-o-oh, she sends him

on the Principal's office. Patrick had a awful mad."

"Where is Miss Bailey?"

"She 's sick. Comes a from doctors letter on the Principal. He comes und tells us how she is sick und Eva Gonorowsky she cries over it."

"Too bad, too bad," muttered Uncle Abraham. "A roast goose would fix her right up, and she won't have it."

"Not 'out birthdays," Isidore acquiesced. "Und I had mine und hers don't never come."

But Isidore had reckoned without George Washington. His birthday was neither past nor distant, and American public spirit gave Uncle Abraham the opportunity which he had sought and even attempted to manufacture. Once more there was an interchange of letters and Mr. Abrahamowsky set to work to design and order a repast worthy of the occasion — festive yet nourishing. Miss Bailey meanwhile devoted much energy to that "Training in Citizenship" to which February with its Washington and Lincoln celebrations is so eminently suited. She found rather surprising historical conceptions abroad in the land and did battle with them to the best of her ability but with less success than had rewarded her efforts in other directions. A large picture of "The Father of his Country" was conspicuously hung; American flags were draped on window and wall; the American spirit was fostered in the hearts of these newest American citizens.

Stories of George Washington in all stages of virtue took the place of the fairy tales with which Miss Bailey had been wont to diversify the afternoons. The First Reader Class listened — open-mouthed — to accounts of his love of truth, his affection for his mother, his exploits with the hatchet. But of his middle years, of the wars he fought, the homes he made forever desolate, she said nothing. There is nothing which can explain this part of a man's work to a child's mind; no way of correlating the war of the Revolution with the Golden Rule. Of his later days when peace had been bought so dearly, of the good he did, the laws he made, the country he assembled out of chaos, she tried to give these future Americans some idea. But the work was hard and the results discouraging.

Even as George Washington transcended Isidore Belchatosky in fame and in glory, so did Uncle Abraham's second celebration transcend his first. The ice-cream was red and white and blue. So were the cakes. So were the ribbons, presented by the host, which adorned the First Reader breast and rose and fell over excited First Reader hearts. Red, white and blue was Uncle Abraham's necktie, his vest, his handkerchiefs, his socks, and the solid bouquet which he presented, with great empressement and many speeches, to Miss Bailey. Patriotism shone through him and was reflected in Isidore's vest — lent for the occasion and to be returned pure and unspotted on pain of instant disinheritance — of blue and white plaid

with red buttons. Even the roast goose was embedded in parti-colored paper napkins, and when Mr. Abrahamowsky had forced it upon Miss Bailey's puzzled acceptance he felt only chagrin that his country boasted and toasted but one relative. He would have gladly made festivals for a national family tree.

Upon this occasion everything was arranged, orderly, glaringly American. Even the songs and recitations were selected, rehearsed, and patriotic. There were solos; there was a grand chorus of an utterly unintelligible version of "My Country 'tis of Thee." Patrick Brennan had learned from his father and now informed the First Reader Class — and Eva Gonorowsky, who was wonderfully edified — that "a government by the people, of the people, and for the people" would do the people a lot of good. Nathan Spiderwitz loudly, but somewhat indistinctly, "swore allegiance to his flag and to the Republic for which it stands," etc.

And then Uncle Abraham took the floor. This speech began with a laudation of Miss Bailey, and it was not until he had effectually banished the "white looks" whose persistence had so troubled him that he devoted his eloquence to "the day we celebrate." Teacher had forgotten this possibility, else would she have imparted to Mr. Abrahamowsky the warning against presenting "the war thought" to the mind of the Child, which Messrs. Froebel and Pestalozzi and assorted professors had impressed upon her. But Uncle Abraham waited for no advice. After a few introductory remarks he asked with oratorical eloquence:

"Who was George Washington?" and every hand in Room 18, except only Miss Bailey's, sprang into the air. He had not expected or desired an answer but it was thrust upon him.

"A God from off of Krishts," answered Ignatius Aloysius Diamanstein. "He 's got gold buttons und a horse."

"I seen him on a p'rade," cried Morris Mogilewsky. "Him und Cap. Dreyfus rides by side themselves. George Wash'ton has awful stylish looks."

"He is the papa off of the country where flowers und Fresh Air Funds stands," submitted Eva Gonorowsky.

"Morris Mogilewsky's interpretation of the classic: 'She May Have Seen Better Days'"

"'Nice!' repeated Uncle Abey. 'She s fine. All silk and a yard wide'"

"He has two birthdays," said Isidore Belchatosky enviously. "To-morrow is one und Christmas is one. It could to be awful nice."

"He never tells no lies," was Sadie Gonorowsky's contribution to the fund of historic data. "He hooks a great big all of cherries from off of his papa's push-cart. Und sooner his papa hollers on him he tells it right out how he takes 'em und he gives 'em back."

"His papa gives him hacks," said Isidore Belchatosky.

"A ax," corrected Patrick Brennan. "Me pop would n't give me no ax. I asked him."

Miss Bailey listened in dismay while Mr. Abrahamowsky went placidly on to answer his own question, she determined upon frequent reviews and much explanation. Uncle Abey began with the secure ground of Washington's virtuous youth and drew ennobling morals therefrom. But before Teacher could stem his eloquence he was launched upon the war story, and the eliminating and expurgating of weeks was undone. He swam through seas of blood. He cracked his hearer's ears with cannon. He undermined their nerves with cries of agony and death. Miss Bailey stopped him when she could and trusted that the First Reader Class would understand as little of his eloquence as they had of hers. They looked absorbedly interested, but that they always did. They were eagerly ready to answer questions, but that, too, they always were. And their answers were, as always, startling.

This habit stood Miss Bailey in good stead when she had made up her mind to interrupt Mr. Abrahamowsky at the first pause in his address. He was describing the devotion of the soldiers, their suffering and their bravery: "We must always remember what George Washington, the Father of our

Country, did for our country," he charged his hearers, "but we must remember too that he was not alone. The army was back of him. He had colonels and majors and captains and generals and soldiers to help him. Always remember the soldiers. There were thousands and thousands of soldiers. And when any one asks you who made your country a free country, you must say 'George Washington and —'" Here Uncle Abraham paused to give due effect to the next word, and the First Reader Class, feeling itself challenged, answered as one man:

"Cap. Dreyfus."

And Uncle Abraham's astounded silence was Teacher's opportunity.

When it was all over and Room 18 was emptied of all save Teacher, the corps of monitors, the roast goose, and Isidore Belchatosky, the latter began to carry out his uncle's instructions:

"Parties like that costs whole bunches of money," he remarked.

"Indeed, they do," Miss Bailey agreed. "It was a beautiful party, a beautiful, beautiful party."

"Whole bunches of money they costs," continued Isidore. "But mine uncle he don't care, he likes you should have parties. He is got kind feelings over me, und you, and George Wash'ton. He 's *got* whole bunches of money, too."

"Surely he must have. Does he keep a store all of his own?"

"No ma'an."

"Does he work in one?"

"Mine uncle? No ma'an. Mine uncle don't work. He plays."

"The piano? How nice! And does he get all his money for that?"

"No ma'an, he don't plays pianos."

"At the theater, then? Is he an actor?"

"No ma'an."

"Well, then, what *does* he play?"

"He don't plays nothings. He just plays."

"Did you ever see him doing it?" asked the puzzled Miss Bailey.

"No ma'an. I ain't seen. He plays by night und I lays then on mine bed. Comes mans und comes ladies und plays mit mine Uncle Abey. They gives him whole bunches of money the while he plays mit 'em so nice."

"a large magenta photograph album and Uncle Abraham's regards"

Miss Bailey and Doctor Ingraham were discussing things and events some evenings later when it occurred to her to inquire:

"Among the powers with which you come in contact at Gouverneur Hospital did you ever meet a Mr. Abraham Abrahamowsky?"

"No," said the doctor. "But 't is a sweet name. What is he?"

"A rival of yours," she laughed. "He lavishes gifts of price — jewelry and roast geese — upon me, and ice-cream upon the class."

"Rich?"

"Apparently. He supports his small orphaned nephew who, by the way, adores him."

"Rather decent of the chap to work for other people's children."

"But according to the nephew, he toils not neither does he spin, and yet Solomon in all his glory never equaled Abraham in his. You never saw such clothes."

"Perhaps he makes them."

"No. He never works. 'Just plays,' Isidore tells me."

"Acts?"

"No. I suggested that. He is neither an actor nor a musician. The nephew reports: 'Mans und ladies they comes by our house by nights und mine uncle he plays mit them.' Now what do you suppose that means? I can't imagine."

"I can," said the doctor grimly. "Tell me that name again."

"Abraham Abrahamowsky."

"And the address? I might get a few fellows together some night and go to play with him."

"I don't remember. I shall send it to you."

It was some days later yet that Room 18 was deserted by its Leader of the Line. At about ten o'clock he arrived attended by his mother in evident haste and *dishabille*.

"Patrick would n't come late, without me," Mrs. Brennan explained. "And I

could n't get him ready in time. We 're *that* upset. His father was brought home to me last night, miss, shot in the leg."

"Mr. Brennan? I 'm ever so sorry. He 's not badly hurt, I hope."

"No, miss. They say he 'll be well in a couple of weeks."

"But how did it happen? Let me give the children something to do while we are talking. I want to hear all about it."

"'Yiss, ma'an. I ain't got no more uncle, on'y him'"

"Well," Mrs. Brennan began, when the First Reader Class had been supplied with the means of keeping Satan at bay, "it was in a little raid. You know, miss, that there is gambling and all sorts going on round about. Sometimes the officers can do something — shut the house up or arrest the people in 'em. Sometimes they can't; friends higher up you know. But yesterday one of the young doctors in Gouverneur handed in a report of a place. Nobody seemed to know the man, so they raided his joint last night. Me husband got shot when the man got ugly and pulled his gun on the officers. But they locked him up an he 'll get a nice long rest on the Island. They 'll learn him not to shoot an officer."

When Miss Bailey and her corps of monitors were leaving the school that afternoon they found Isidore Belchatosky, who had not graced Room 18 during the day, in copious tears upon the big steps. He was wonderfully unkempt and bedraggled, and Teacher paused an appreciable moment before she sat close beside him and gathered his dejected little body to her.

"What is it, honey?" she crooned. "What 's the matter with the poor old boy."

"Oh, mine uncle," wailed Isidore, "mine poor uncle."

"Your Uncle Abraham?"

"Yiss ma'an. I ain't got no more uncle, on'y him. I ain't got no mama nor no papa nor nothin' on'y mine uncle, und now they takes him away. I ain't got nobody. The lady by our floor is nice on'y I ain't lovin' so awful much mit her. I needs mine Uncle Abey."

"Poor Izzie," cried Eva Gonorowsky, and stooped to take the sufferer's hand. By so doing she disclosed the sturdy figure of her satellite, Patrick Brennan, and Isidore's grief was quickly changed to wrath.

"Think shame how your papa makes mit mine uncle," he raged. "Mine uncle he don't makes nothing mit him und extra he commences. Anyway mine uncle he shoots him mit pistols in the leg."

"Not your uncle," Miss Bailey corrected him. "Patrick's mother came to see me this morning and told me about poor Mr. Brennan. But it was not your uncle who shot him. It was a man who kept — well, I can't explain the kind of a man it was. But not your uncle."

"It was mine uncle," Isidore maintained. "I lays on mine bed in sleep when comes a great big all of mans — your fellow was mit ——"

"No," cried Teacher; "not Doctor Ingraham!"

"Teacher yiss ma'an, your fellow."

"Oh, Isidore, Isidore!" wailed Teacher, and fell to crying as bitterly as the boy. "It is all my fault and he was so good to us."

"Yis ma'an, he had feelings. He makes on me und you und George Washington, parties. He is kind mans."

"Huh!" snorted Patrick, "he shot me pop."

"'Cause your papa was rubberin' round. Your papa is awful nosy. He comes mit that all of mans und they takes mine uncle's chips und his cards und a table what he had mit turning wheels. Mine poor uncle he feels awful bad, und your papa und Teacher's fellow they says cheek on him on'y he don't says nothings. On'y by a while they makes they shall take where mine uncle's money is und he hits a man — a little bit of man — a hack. Sooner the all of mans they hits mine uncle und they takes his money und they chases him around und they holds the mans und the ladies what was playin' mit mine uncle — the ladies they hollers somethin' fierce. So-o-oh mine uncle he takes his shootin' pistol und he shoots Patrick Brennan's nosy papa in the leg."

"That was very wrong of him," said Teacher.

"Ain't George Wash'ton made shoots mit pistols?" demanded Isidore.

"Yes, he did," admitted Miss Bailey.

"Ain't he hit a great big all of mans? Und ain't they made him presidents over it unds papas off of countries where flowers stands und birds sings?"

"Und where the Fresh Air Fund is," supplemented Eva.

"Well, not exactly because he hit so many men. And besides it all happened long and long ago. They don't make presidents that way any more."

"Ain't Teddy Rosenfelt hit mans? Und ain't they made him presidents over it? On'y that ain't how they makes mit mine uncle. They don't makes him presidents nor papas neither. They takes und puts somethings from iron on his hands so he could n't to talk even. They puts him in a wagon und they says they sends him over the water."

"Where?" asked Teacher.

"Over the water where Islands is und prisons stands. That 's how they makes mit him the while he hits somebody mit pistols. I guess they don't know 'bout George und Teddy. They makes them — mine uncle tells you how they makes George und Teddy — presidents und papas over it."

"But that was from long, Izzie," Eva reminded him.

"And altogether different," added Miss Bailey.

"An' me pop was n't there. He 'd a pinched 'em," said Patrick.

"Und George had his gang along," observed Nathan Spiderwitz.

"Und Izzie," said Morris Mogilewsky, summing the matter up, "George Wash'ton he ain't hit mans in legs mit shootin' pistols out killin' 'em. You could n't to be presidents und papas over that. George Wash'ton he kills 'em all bloody und dead. He kills bunches of tousens of mans. Why ain't your uncle kill somebody?"

"He hits him in the leg," reiterated Isidore sadly.

"But he ain't killed 'em. Und, Izzie, sooner you ain't killed somebody bloody und dead, you could n't to be presidents und papas off of countries."

CATHERWOOD'S DATA OF ETHICS

BY

ARTHUR TRAIN

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK CRAIG

I

CERTAINLY, sir. Your clothes shall be delivered at the Metropole at nine-forty-five to-morrow evenin', sir."

Pondel's dapper little clerk tossed a half dozen bolts of "trouserings" upon the polished table, and smiled graciously at the firm's best paying customer.

"Here Bulstead! Take Mr. Catherwood's waist measure — just a matter of precaution," he added deferentially. "These are somethin' fine, sir — very fine! When they came in I says to Mr. Pondel: "If only Mr. Catherwood could see that woolen! It 's a shame,' I says, 'not to save it for 'im!' An' Mr. Pondel agreed with me at once. 'Very good, Wessons,' says he. 'Lay aside enough of that Lancaster to make Mr. Catherwood a single-breasted sack suit, and if he don't fancy it I 'll have it made up into somethin' for myself,' he says. Ain't that so Mr. Pondel?"

The gentleman addressed had graciously sauntered over to congratulate Mr. Catherwood upon his selections.

"Ah! Very good. Very good indeed! How 's that, Wessons? Yes, I told him to keep that piece for you, sir. Lord Bentwood begged for it almost with the tears in his eyes, as I may say, but I assured him that it was already spoken for." He patted the cloth with a fat, ring-covered hand. An atmosphere of exclusive opulence emanated from every inch of his sleek, pudgy person — from the broad white forehead over the glinting steel-gray eyes, from the pointed Vandyke trimmed to resemble that of a certain exalted personage, from his drab waistcoated abdomen begirdled with its heavy chain and dangling seals, down to the gray-gaitered patent leathers. Catherwood distrusted, feared, relied upon him.

The clubman wiped his monocle and glanced out through the plate-glass window. Marlborough Square was flooded with the soft sunshine of the autumn afternoon. Hardly a pedestrian violated the eminently aristocratic silence of St. Timothy's.

"Very thoughtful of you, I 'm sure," he replied, not grudging Pondel the extra two guineas which he very well knew the other invariably charged for these little favors. It were cheap at twice the money to feel so much a gentleman.

"But this is Saturday, and it 's five o'clock now. I don't see how you can possibly finish all those suits by to-morrow evening. You know I really did n't intend to order anythin' but the frock coat. Perhaps you 'd just better let the rest go. I can get 'em some other time."

"Not at all, Mr. Catherwood. Not at all. We are always delighted to serve you by any means in our power. Did Wessons say they would be finished to-morrow? Then to-morrow they shall be, sir. I 'll set my men at work immediately. Pedler! Where 's Pedler? Send him here at once!"

A hollow-eyed, lank, round-shouldered journeyman parted the curtains that concealed the rear of the room, and nervously approached his employer. He blinked at the unaccustomed sunlight, suppressing a cough.

"Did you call me, sir?"

"Yes," replied Pondel, with the severity of one granting an undeserved favor. "This is Mr. Catherwood of whom you have heard us speak so often. I believe you have cut several of the gentleman's suits. He is to take the 'Majestic' which sails early Monday morning, and I have promised that his clothes shall be ready to-morrow evening. Can you arrange to stay here to-night and whatever portion of to-morrow is necessary to finish them?"

A worried look passed over the man's face, and his hand flew to his mouth to strangle another cough.

"Certainly, sir. That is — of course — Yes, sir. May I ask how many, sir?"

"Only three, I believe. I was sure it could be arranged. Please ask Aggam to assist you. That is all."

"Yes, sir. Very good, sir." Pedler hesitated a moment as if about to speak, then turned listlessly and plodded back behind the curtains.

"Very obliging man — Pedler. You see, there will be no difficulty, Mr. Catherwood."

"Well, I don't see how on earth you 're goin' to do it!" protested Catherwood feebly. He wanted the clothes badly, now that he had seen the material. "It 's mighty good of you to take all this trouble."

Mr. Pondel made a depreciating gesture.

"We are always glad to serve you, sir!" he repeated as Wessons escorted the distinguished customer to the door.

"It 's a great privilege to be employed by such a man as Mr. Pondel," he whispered. "He thinks an enormous lot of you, sir. Very fine man — Mr. Pondel."

As the hansom jogged rapidly towards the hotel, Catherwood reflected painfully upon the enormous sums of money that he annually transferred from his own pockets to those of the lordly tailor. Not that the money made any particular difference. The clubman was well enough fixed, only sometimes the bills were unexpectedly large. The three suits just ordered would average fourteen guineas each. Roughly they would come to two hundred and twenty-five dollars, plus the duty, which he always paid conscientiously. And he was getting off easy at that. He remembered heaps of bills for over two hundred pounds, and that was only the beginning, for he bought most of his clothes right in New York.

Climbing the steps of his hotel he wondered vaguely how long Pedler and the other fellow would have to work to finish the suits. Of course, they would be paid extra — were probably glad to do it. The chap had a nasty cough, though. O, well, that was their business — not his. So long as he put up the money, Pondel could look out for the rest.

However, he felt a distinct sense of relief that his own obligations consisted merely in dressing, dining at the Savoy with Aversly, and then leisurely taking in the Alhambra afterwards. Once in his room he found that Thompson had already laid out his clothes. Catherwood rather dreaded dressing, for the place was one of those heavily oppressive apartments characteristic of English hotels. Green marble, yellow plush, and black walnut filled the foreground background, and middle distance, while a marble-topped table, placed squarely in the center of the room, offered the only oasis in the desert of upholstery, in the form of a single massive book, bound in brown morocco and bearing the inscription stamped upon its cover in heavy gilt:

HOTEL METROPOLE

HOLY BIBLE

NOT TO BE REMOVED

It fascinated him, recalling the chained hair-brush and comb of the Pacific coast. There you were offered cleanliness — here godliness, by the proprietors — only the means thereto were not to be taken away. The next comer must have his chance. Maybe there was a statute requiring it.

As the clubman idly lifted the volume, he suddenly realized that this was the first Bible he had actually touched in thirty years. The last time he had owned one himself had been at school when he was fifteen years old. Something moved him to carry it to the window. The sun was just dropping over the scarlet chimney-pots of London. Its burnished glare played upon the red gilt edges of the leaves, as Catherwood mechanically allowed the book to fall open in his hands. He read these words:

"So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter."

The sun sank; the chimneys deadened against the sky-line. When Thompson, ten minutes later, stole in to see if his master needed his assistance, he found Catherwood staring into the darkening west.

II

The bell on St. Timothy's tolled twelve o'clock as Catherwood's hansom, straight from the Alhambra, clacked into the moonlit silence of Marlborough Square. A soft breath of distant gardens hung on the cool air. The chimneys rose from the housetops

sharp against a pale blue sky glittering with stars. Here and there a yellow window gleamed for a moment under the eaves, then vanished mysteriously. It was a night for lovers — calm, still, ecstatic — for hayfields under the harvest-moon, for white, ghostly reaches of the Thames, for poetry, for the exquisite enjoyment of earth's nearest approach to heaven.

The trap above Catherwood's head opened.

"Beg pardon, sir. W'ere did you s'y sir?"

"I said *Pondel's,*" replied Catherwood, rather sharply. He knew the cabby must think him a lunatic, but he did n't care. He intended to do the decent thing. Hang it! The fellow could mind his own business.

The hansom crossed the street and reined up in the shadow. All was dark, silent, deserted. Only the brass plate beside the door reflected strangely the moonlight across the way.

"'Ere 's Pondel's, sir." The cabby got down and crossed the sidewalk to the door.

"All shut hup!" he commented. "Close at six."

A dark figure emerged quickly from a neighboring shadow.

"'Ere! Wot is it you want?" demanded the bobby accosting the cabman with tentative and potential roughness.

"Gent want's Pondel's. *I* dunno w'y. Ax 'im yerself!" responded cabby in an injured tone.

The bobby turned to the hansom.

"This shop 's closed at six o'clock," he announced. "Wot do you want?"

Catherwood felt ten thousand times a fool. The beauty of the night, the odoriferous quiet, the peace of the deserted square all made his errand seem monstrously idiotic. The universe was wheeling silently across the housetops, respectable men and women were in their beds, only night-hawks, lovers, policemen were abroad. It was as if a worm were raising objection to some cardinal law. Why should he try to upset the order and regularity of the London night, clattering into this slumbering section, startling a respectable somnolent policeman, making an ass of himself before his cabby — because somewhere a fellow was workin' overtime on his trousers. He imagined that as soon as he had made his explanation the bobby and the driver would collapse with merriment, and hale him to a mad-house. But Catherwood set his teeth. He was fighting for a principle. He would n't "welch" now. He clambered out of the hansom.

"I want to find Pondel, because he 's got some fellows workin' on my clothes, and I don't propose to have anybody workin' for me on Sunday. Understand? It 's *Sunday*. I don't intend to have folks workin' on my clothes when they ought to be in bed."

He spoke brokenly, catching his breath between words, almost ready to cry, defiantly — then waited for his auditors to fall upon each other's necks in derisive mirth. He forgot, however, that he was in London. The situation was one apposite to *American* humor, but evoked no sense of amusement in the policeman. He treated Catherwood's explanation with vast respect. Our hero gained confidence. The bobby regretted that the place seemed closed; ventured to express his approval of the clubman's altrusitic effort; dilated upon it to the cabby, who was correspondingly impressed. Catherwood, immensely cheered, held forth on the wrongs of labor at some length, and, finding a sympathetic audience, produced cigars. The three proved, as it were, a little group of humanitarians united in a common purpose. Then, suddenly, inconsequently, inexcusably, a man coughed. The sound was muffled, but unmistakable. It came from a point directly beneath their feet. The bobby rapped sharply on the pavement several times.

"Hi, there, you!" he called. "Hi there, you in Pondel's. Come an' open hup!"

They could hear a dull murmur of conversation, the cough was repeated, a bench dragged across a floor, some fastening was slowly loosed, and a yellow gleam of light shot up through the shadow as a scuttle opened in the sidewalk. A lean, scrawny figure thrust itself upward, sleepily rubbing its eyes, collarless, its shirt open at the breast, its hair tousled, coughing. Catherwood, now confident that he had the support of his companions, addressed the ghost, in whom he recognized Pedler, the journeyman from behind the curtains. The clubman's face, however, was concealed in shadow from the other.

"You 're workin' for Pondel, ar'n't you?"

The ghost coughed again, and shivered, although the air was warm.

"Yes," it answered huskily.

"Are you workin' on some clothes for a gentleman who 's sailin' on Monday?"

"Yes," it repeated.

"Then don't, any more," chirped Catherwood encouragingly. "Those clothes are for me, and I don't want you to work any longer. You ought to be in bed."

"Wotcher givin' us?" grumbled Pedler. "G'wan! Leave us alone!" he started to descend. But the bobby stepped forward.

"Look 'ere," he said roughly. "Don't you understand? It 's just as the gentleman s'ys. You don't *'ave* to work any more to-night. You can go 'ome."

"I s'y, wotcher givin' us?" repeated the other. "I cawn't go 'ome. Mr. Pondel's horders is to sty 'ere until the clothes is finished. M'ybe it 's as you s'y, but I cawn't go 'ome."

At this juncture a child began to cry drowsily below, and a woman's voice could be heard striving to comfort it.

"You don't mean you 've got a baby down there!" exclaimed Catherwood.

"Only little Annie," replied Pedler. "An' the old woman."

"Any one else?"

"Aggam."

"Let 's go down" suggested the bobby. "*I* can make 'em understand." The ghost descended, dazed, and Catherwood, the bobby, and last of all, the cabman, followed down a creaking ladder, into a sort of vault under the cellar. A small oil wick gave out a feeble, fluctuating light. On one side, cross-legged, sat a shriveled-up, little old man, his brown beard streaked with gray, stitching. He did not look up, but only worked the faster. A thin woman crouched on a broken chair, holding a little girl in her lap.

"There, there, Annie, don't cry. The bobby's not arter *you*. It 's all right, darlin'!"

Strewn about the cement floor lay the bolts of Lancaster which Catherwood had selected, together with patterns, scissors, and unfinished garments.

"Excuse the child, sir," apologized the woman. "She 's just a bit sleepy."

"Well," said Catherwood, his indignation rising at the scene, and shame burning in his cheeks. "Go right home. I won't have you workin' on these clothes any more." How he wished Pondel was there to get a piece of his mind!

Pedler looked wearily at Aggam.

"Wot d'ye s'y, Aggam?"

The other kept on stitching.

"I gets my horders from Pondel," he replied, shortly. "An' I don't tyke no horders from no one else!"

"But look here," cried Catherwood. "The clothes are *mine*, ain't they? *Pondel* has n't anything to do with it! And *I* tell you to *go home*."

"Yes," grunted Aggam. "An' then you loses your job, does yer? I don't want no toff mixin' into *my* affairs. I minds my business, they can mind their's!"

"I s'y, that 's no w'y to speak to the gentleman," exclaimed the bobby with disgust. "'E 's only tryin' to do yer a favor! 'Ave n't yer got no manners?"

"*I* minds *my* business, let 'im mind 'is'n!" repeated Aggam, stolidly.

"Well, *I* must *s'y*," ejaculated the cabby, "they 're a bloomin' grateful lot!"

The tall man seemed to resent this last from one of his own station.

"I appreciates wot the gent wants," he said weakly, "but it 's just like Aggam s'ys. Wot can *we* do? The gent cawn't tell us to go 'ome!"

The child began to cry again. Catherwood was exasperated almost to the point of profanity.

"Don't you *want* to go home?" he exclaimed.

The woman laughed a hollow, mirthless laugh.

"Annie an' me 'ave st'y'd 'ere all the evenin' just to be with Jim. 'E 's awful sick. An' 'e 'll 'ave to st'y 'ere all d'y to-morrer. Do we *want* to go 'ome!"

Her husband dashed his shirt-sleeve across his eyes.

"Don't, Nell," he muttered. "I ain't sick. I can work. You go 'ome with the kid."

Catherwood thrust a handful of bank-notes toward her.

"Where does old Pondel live?" he inquired of the bobby.

"Out in Kew somewheres," replied the officer.

The woman was staring blankly at the money. Suddenly she dropped the little girl and began to sob. Jim broke into a fit of harsh coughing. The cabman climbed up the ladder. The temperature of the vault seemed insufferable to Catherwood.

"I suppose you 'll go home if Pondel says so?" he suggested.

"Just watch us!" growled Aggam.

"Take that child home, anyhow, and put it to bed," ordered the clubman. "I 'll be back in an hour or so!"

As he climbed up through the scuttle into the sweet, soft moonlight, and started to enter the hansom, the bobby held out his hand.

"Excuse me, sir. I 'ope you 'll pardon the liberty, but, would you mind, I've got a brother in America — Smith's the naime — 'e lives in a plaice called Manitoba. Do you 'appen to know 'im?"

"I 'm sorry," replied our friend. "I never ran across him."

"Where to now?" asked the cabby.

"To Kew," replied Catherwood.

They swung out of the square, leaving the bobby standing in the shadow of Pondel's.

"I 'll look out for 'em while you 're gone," called the latter encouragingly. They crossed Bond Street, followed Grosvenor Street into Park Lane, and plunging round Hyde Park corner, past the statute to England's greatest soldier, they entered Kingsbridge. Catherwood, all awake from his recent experience, saw things that he had never observed before — bedraggled flower-girls in gaudy hats, with heart-rending faces — drunken laborers staggering along upon the arms of sad-featured women — young girls, slender, painted, strolling with an affectation of lightheartedness along the glittering sidewalks. On they jogged, past narrow streets where, amid the flare of torches the entire population of the neighborhood swarmed, bargained, swore, and quarreled; where little children rolled under the costers' carts, fighting for scraps of meat and decaying vegetables; and where their passage was obstructed by the throngs of miserable humanity for whom this was their only park, their only club. It being Saturday night the butchers were selling off their remnants of meat, and their shrill cries could be heard for blocks. Several times the horse shied to avoid trampling upon some old hag who, clutching her wretched purchase at her breast, hurried homeward before a drunken lout should snatch it from her. Catherwood had never imagined the like. It was with a sigh of relief that they left the Hammersmith Road behind, and at last reached the residential districts. In about an hour they found themselves in Kew. A cool breeze from the country fanned his cheek. On either hand trim little villas with smooth lawns lined the road, and the moonlit air was fragrant with the smell of damp grass, violets, and heliotrope. Here and there could be heard the tinkle of a cottage piano, and the laughter of belated merry-makers on the verandas.

They located Mr. Pondel's villa without difficulty. Standing back some thirty yards from the street, its well-kept garden full of flowering shrubs and carefully-tended beds of geraniums, it was a residence typical of the London suburb, with fretwork along the piazza roof, a stone dog guarding each side of the steps, and salmon-pink curtains at the parlor windows. The door stood open, a Japanese lamp burned in the hallway, and the murmur of voices floated out from the door leading into the parlor. Catherwood once again felt the overwhelming absurdity of his position. Over his shoulder, as he stood by the hyacinths at the door, floated the same big moon in the same soft heaven. Damp and fragrant, the wind blew in from the lawn and swayed the portières in the narrow hall, behind which, doubtless, sat the lordly Pondel, friend of noblemen, adviser of royalty, entrenched in his castle, a unit in an impregnable system. The whinny of the cab-horse beyond the hedge recalled to Catherwood the necessity for action. He realized that he was losing moral ground every instant.

The bell jangled harshly somewhere in the back of the house. A man's voice — Pondel's — muttered indistinctly, there was a feminine whisper in response, some one placed a glass on a table and pushed back a chair. A clock in the neighborhood struck two, and Pondel emerged through the portières — Pondel in a wadded, claret-colored dressing-gown embroidered with birds of Paradise, in carpet slippers, with a meerschaum pipe, watery eyes, and slightly disarranged hair. It was rather dim in the hallway, and he did not recognize his visitor.

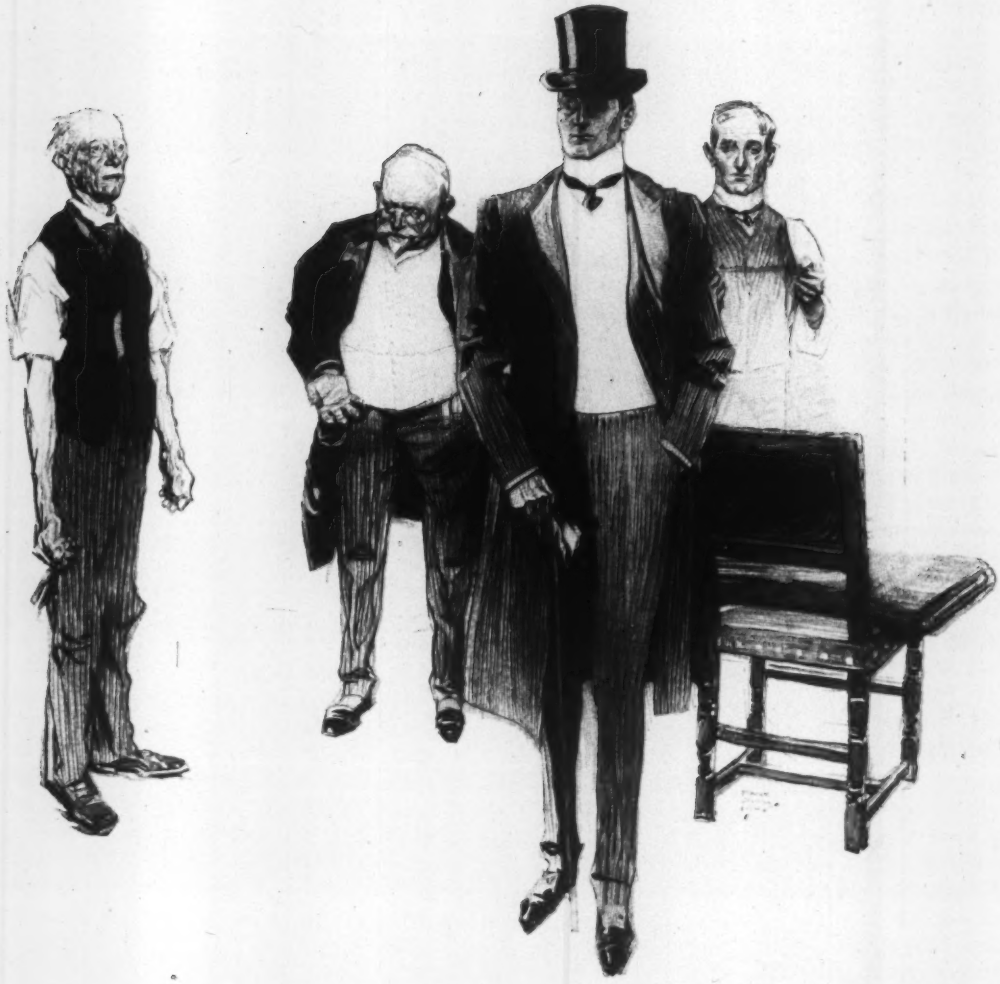
"What is it? What do you want?" The inquiry was abrupt and a little thick.

"Good evening, Mr. Pondel," stammered Catherwood. "I hope you 'll excuse me for disturbing you at this hour. It 's about the clothes."

"W'o is it?" Pondel peered into his guest's flushed face. "W'y Mr. Catherwood, what are you doin' way out 'ere? Excuse my appearance — a little pardonable neglishay of a Saturday evenin'. Come right in, won't you? Great honor, I'm sure. Though, if you 'll believe it, I once 'ad the honor of a call from His Grace the Duke of

Drawn by Frank Craig

"down a creaking ladder, into a sort of vault under the cellar"



"'This is Mr. Catherwood of whom you have heard us speak so often'"

Bashton right in this very 'all. Excuse me w'ile I announce your presence to Mrs. Pondel."

Catherwood said something about having to go at once, but Pondel shuffled through the curtains, almost immediately sweeping them back with a lordly gesture of welcome.

"This way, Mr. Catherwood." Our miserable friend entered the parlor. "Elizabeth, hallow me to present Mr. Catherwood — one of my oldest customers."

Elizabeth — a fat vision of fifty-five, with peroxide hair, and a soft pink of unchanging hue mantling her elsewhere mottled cheeks, arose graciously from the table where she and her husband had been playing double-dummy bridge, and courtesied.

"Cha'med, I 'm sure. What a beautiful evenin' ! Won't you si' down ?" murmured this enchantress.

Catherwood took a chair and Pondel pressed whisky and water upon him. O, Mr. Catherwood need n't be afraid of it — it was the real old thing — Lord Langollen had sent him a dozen. Lizzie would take a nip with 'em. Eh, Lizzie ? A gen'leman did n't take that long trip every evenin', and a little refreshment would not only do him good, but, as the Yankees said, would show there was no 'ard feelin', eh ? He must really take just a drop — Say when !

Lizzie poured out a glass for the much embarrassed guest. She was in a flowered kimono, even more "neglishay" than her

husband, but the bower in which the goddess reclined was a perfect pearl of the decorator's art. Cupids, also "neglishay," toyed with one another around a cluster of electric burners in the ceiling, gay streamers of painted blossoms dangling from their hands and floating down the walls. Gilt chairs, a white and gilt sofa, and a brown etching in a Florentine frame on each wall were the most conspicuous articles of furniture. At the windows the brilliant salmon-pink curtains bellied softly in the breeze that stole into the chamber and diluted the gentle odor of Parma violets, which exuded from the dame in the kimono. To Pondel, Catherwood's presence was an evidence of his power; and his pride, tickled mightily, put him in an exquisite good humor. Certainly the occasion required from him, the host, a proper felicitation.

"'Ere's to our better acquaintance," said the tailor, raising his glass sententiously. "Lizzie, drink to Mr. Catherwood!"

The three drank solemnly. Then the voluble tailor addressed himself to the task of entertaining his distinguished guest. Catherwood could catch at no opening to explain his visit. Pondel chatted gaily of Paris, the Continent, and familiarly of the races and the *beau monde*. Apparently he knew (by their first names), half the nobility of England, and he endeavored to place his customer equally at his ease with them. He ventured that he knew how most young Americans spent their time in London and Paris; dropped with a wink, that in spite of his present uxoriousness he had been a bit of a dog himself, and ended by suggesting another toast to "A short life and a merry one." The lady of the kimono, grammatically not so strong as her husband, contented herself with expansive smiles and frequent recurrence to the tumbler.

"I must explain my visit," finally broke in Catherwood. "It's about the clothes!"

Pondel smiled condescendingly.

"My dear Mr. Catherwood, you don't need to worry in the slightest. They'll be done promptly to-morrow evenin', take my word for it."

Catherwood flushed. How in Heaven's name could he ever make the tailor understand?

"I've decided I don't want 'em!" he stammered.

Pondel's glass went to the table with a bang, and he gazed blankly at his customer. The clubman, not realizing the implication, did not proceed.

"That's all right," finally responded Pondel a trifle coldly. "There's no hurry about settlement. You can take a year, if necessary." Mrs. Pondel slipped unobtrusively out of the room, leaving a trail of perfume behind her.

"O," exclaimed our friend, catching his breath. "It isn't that. But you see I can't have those men workin' over night and to-morrow on my account. It's — it's against my principles."

Pondel brightened. A load had been taken from his heart. So long as Catherwood's bank account was good, any idiosyncrasy the American might exhibit did not matter. He had always regarded Catherwood, however, as a man of the world, and had esteemed him accordingly. He perceived that he had been mistaken. His customer was merely a religious crank. He had had experience with them before.

"Pooh! That's all right," said he, resuming his former cordiality. "Why, they like to earn the extra money. They're all devoted to my interests, you know."

"Well, I don't want 'em to work any longer on my clothes," repeated Catherwood helplessly.

"I understand," replied Mr. Pondel, rather loftily. "I'm afraid, however, it's too late to stop them now. The cloth 'as been cut, and they would not stop contrary to my direction."

"That's the point," returned Catherwood, "I want you to change your orders."

"But, my dear sir," expostulated the tailor, "you can't expect me to go to London this time of night. Besides, they're nearly done by this time. It's impossible!"

"I'll manage that," exclaimed Catherwood. "I've been down to the shop already and they're waiting for me now to come back with your permission to go home — they would n't go without it."

"Dear, dear!" replied the tailor, changing his tactics. "How much interest you have taken in their welfare! How kind and thoughtful of you. No, they're faithful men — they would n't think of disobeying orders. But what a shame I did n't know of it before. Why, they might 'ave been at 'ome and in their beds. However, I sha' n't forget 'em at the end of the month. Mr. Catherwood, I respect you. I have never known of a more unselfish act. Permit me to say it, sir, you

"'It is n't that. But you see I can't have those men workin' over night and to-morrow on my account. It's—it's against my principles'"

are a Christian — a true Christian. I wish there were more like you, sir!"

Catherwood rose to his feet. His one thought now was to escape as quickly as possible. The sight of Pondel's smiling countenance filled him with unutterable disgust. Suppose the fellows at the club could see him sitting in this pursy tailor's parlor, with his scented wife, and gilded chairs——!"

The tailor, however, was anxious to restore the cordiality of their relations, and slopped over in his eagerness to show how kind he was to his men, and how considerate of their well-being. He took Catherwood's arm familiarly as he showed him to the door.

"Yes," he added confidentially, "this is a very good locality. Only the best people live in this neighborhood. Rather a neat little property." He proffered Catherwood a cigar. The clubman wanted to kick him for a miserable, dirty cad.

"Right back!" he said to the cabby, hardly replying to the tailor's good-night.

London was asleep. Even the streets through which he had driven to Kew were hushed in preparation for the sodden Sunday to come. The moon had lowered over the housetops, and St. Timothy's was in the shadow as once again he drew up in front of Pondel's

"Back already, sir?" The bobby stepped out to meet him.

"Yes," replied Catherwood wearily. "And those fellows down there are goin' home."

The bobby rapped on the scuttle. Once more Fedler's head protruded above the sidewalk.

"Mr. Pondel says you 're to go home," said Catherwood.

"The gent's been all the way to Kew for you," interjected the bobby.

"Hi, Aggam!" exclaimed Jim, huskily. "Th' gentleman says we are to go 'ome, Mr. Pondel says." He disappeared. Aggam could be heard muttering below. Presently the light was extinguished and both emerged from the scuttle and put on their coats. Catherwood felt sleepily exultant. Pedler pushed the scuttle into place.

"Well," said Catherwood after an awkward pause, "can I give you a lift? Which way do you go? I tell you what, you come back with me to the hotel, and then the hansom can take you both home."

Pedler and Aggam looked doubtfully at one another.

"O, come on, you fellers!" exclaimed Catherwood, all his natural good spirits returning with a rush. "Get in there, now!"

Pedler and Aggam climbed in and Catherwood directed the driver to go to the Metropole, after stuffing a sovereign into the hand of his friend, the policeman. The stars were still marching across the sky, and the breeze had freshened. Every window was dark; no one was astir. They heard only the echoes of their horse's hoof-beats. Yet the restless silence that precedes the dawn was in the air.

"I lives miles aw'y from 'ere," said Pedler after a meditative period.

"So do I," supplemented Aggam.

"I don't care," replied Catherwood. "I 've had this cab all night, anyhow, and I want to celebrate. You see, this is the first time I ever got ahead of my tailor."

Another long pause ensued. They were not a talkative lot, surely. Catherwood's flow of language absolutely deserted him. He could think of no subject of conversation whatever. Pedler finally came to his assistance.

"I'm thirty-seven year old, an' this is the fust time I 've ever ridden in a 'ansom."

"Jiminy!" exclaimed Catherwood. "You don't say so! What luck!"

"Fust time for me, too," added Aggam.

After this burst of confidence the three rode in utter silence. At the Metropole the clubman jumped out, and bade his companions good-night.

As the cabby gathered up the reins preparatory to a fresh start, Aggam leaned forward rather apologetically.

"You must hexcuse me," he remarked, "but I don't want to sail under false colors, and I feel as if I hort to s'y that while I 'm a Socialist, I 'ave no particular sympathy with Sabbatarianism."

"Well, neither have I," replied Catherwood encouragingly, an answer which probably puzzled Mr. Aggam for a fortnight.

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

A CHARACTER STUDY

BY

IDA M. TARBELL

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE STANDARD OIL COMPANY," "LIFE OF LINCOLN," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH PORTRAITS

PART TWO

"There is a prince now alive (whose name it may not be proper to mention) who ever preaches the doctrines of peace and good faith; but if he had observed either the one or the other, he would long ago have lost both his reputation and dominions."

— Machiavelli — *The Prince.*

WHEN the late Senator Hanna said of John D. Rockefeller, "Money mad, money mad, sane in every other respect but money mad," he gave the true biographic clue to the man's character. No candid study of his career can lead to other conclusion than that he is a victim of perhaps the ugliest, the least reasonable of all passions, that for money, money as an end — a victim, for the passion has mastered all other ambitions and cravings — has made itself supreme and is in his eyes worthy of what it has cost him.

It is not a pleasant picture that such a reflection arouses — not the portrait of a gentleman one would like to know — this money-maniac secretly, patiently, eternally plotting how he may add to his wealth. Nor is the man himself pleasanter to look upon. Study the photograph on page 388, the last taken of Mr. Rockefeller, study George Varian's powerful sketch from life made in 1903, and say if it be worth while to be the richest man in the world at the cost these portraits show. Concentration, craftiness, cruelty, and something indefinably repulsive are in them. The photograph reveals nothing more. Mr. Varian's sketch is vastly more interesting for it suggests, besides, both power and pathos and no one can look long on Mr. Rockefeller without feeling these qualities. The impression he makes on one who sees him for the first time is overwhelming. Brought face to face with Mr. Rockefeller unexpectedly, and not knowing him, the writer's immediate thought was, "This is the oldest man in the world — a living mummy." But there is no sense of feebleness with the sense of age; indeed there is one of terrific power. The disease which in the last three or four years has swept Mr. Rockefeller's head bare of hair, stripped away even eyelashes and eyebrows, has revealed all the strength of his great head. Mr. Rockefeller is a big man, not over tall but large with powerful shoulders and a neck like that of a bull. The head is wide and deep and disproportionately high, with curious bumps made more conspicuous by the tightly drawn, dry, naked skin. The interest of the big face lies in the eyes and mouth. Eyes more useful for a man of Mr. Rockefeller's practices could hardly be conceived. They are small and intent and steady, and they are as expressionless as a wall. They see everything and reveal nothing. It is not a shifty eye — not a cruel or leering one. It is something vastly more to be feared — a blank eye, looking through and through things, and telling nothing of what they found on the way.

But if the eyes say nothing the mouth tells much. Its former mask, the full mustache Mr. Rockefeller has always worn, is now completely gone. Indeed the greatest loss Mr.

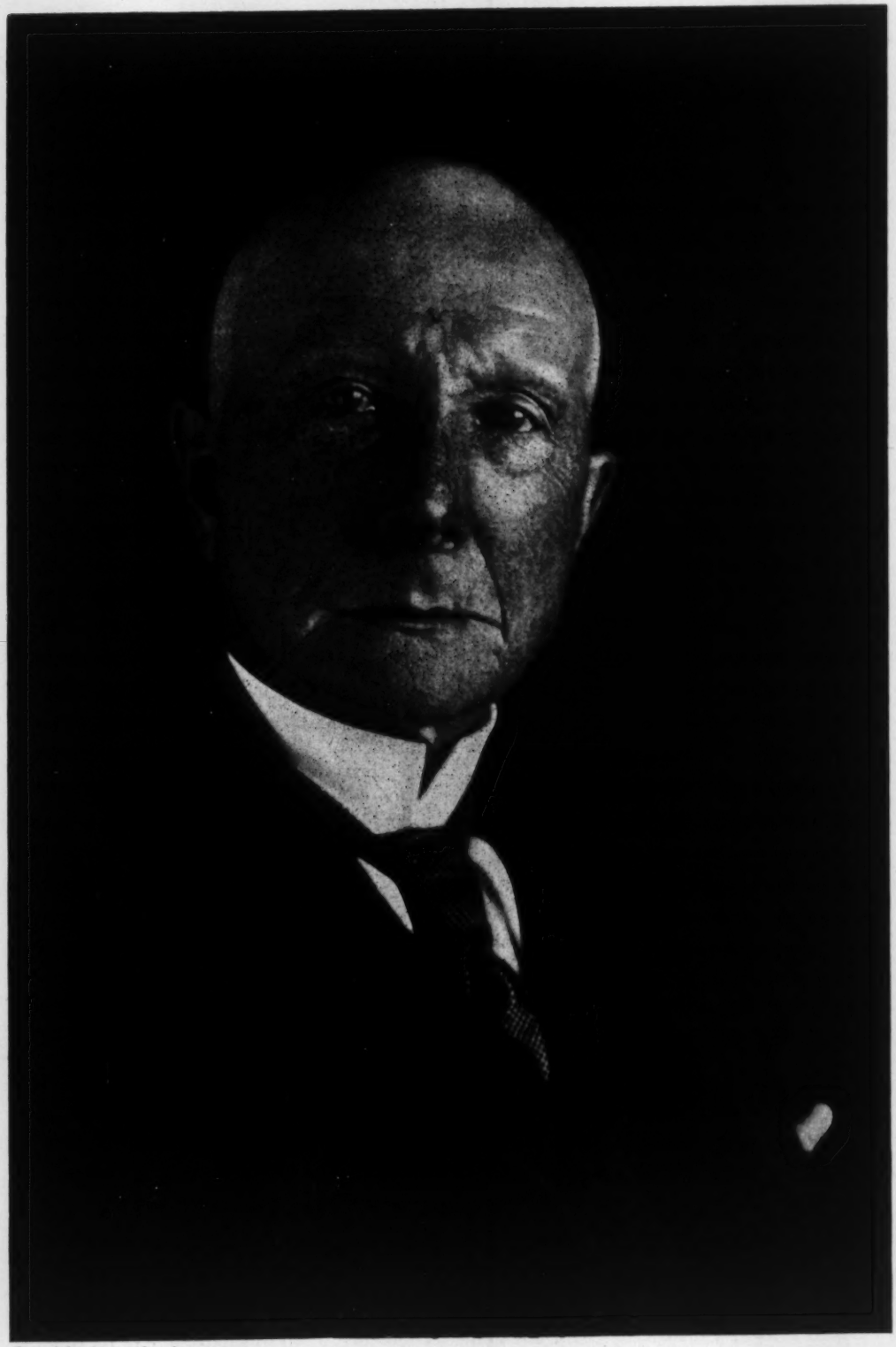
Rockefeller sustained when his hair went was that it revealed his mouth. It is only a slit — the lips are quite lost, as if by eternal grinding together of the teeth — teeth set on something he would have. It is at once the cruelest feature of his face — this mouth — the cruelest and the most pathetic, for the hard, close-set line slants downward at the corners, giving a look of age and sadness. The downward droop is emphasized by deep vertical furrows running from each side of his nose. Mr. Rockefeller may have made himself the richest man in the world, but he has paid. Nothing but paying ever ploughs such lines in a man's face, ever sets his lips to such a melancholy angle.

The big cheeks are puffy, bulging unpleasantly under the eyes, and the skin which covers them has a curiously unhealthy pallor. It is this puffiness, this unclean flesh, which repels, as the thin slit of a mouth terrifies. To the whole face a certain distinction is lent by the nose which is small and fine, rising like a thorn from between the heavy cheeks — a nose whose nostrils might vibrate were not the man so much the master of his features.

All together it is a strange and powerful head, and one cannot look on it and ever forget it. It is a head which has suggested many unpleasant comparisons and all of them with their savor of truth — all of them comprehensible. One who knows what it cost to build Mr. Rockefeller's fortune understands why a man who had done business with him shuddered when he looked at Mr. Varian's sketch and said, "An Indian with a tomahawk — an Indian with a tomahawk" — understands Jules Hurets description in one of his American letters: "Under his silk skull-cap he seems like an old monk of the inquisition such as one sees in the Spanish picture galleries" — understands why a man of imagination characterized him as "dead, like a devil-fish," and recalled Victor Hugo's famous comparison, "*A sleeve with a fist sewed up inside*"

But when one has counted the cost of making Mr. Rockefeller's fortune — the cost to the public, to his friends and foes, and to himself, he has not said all. There is, if you please, another Mr. Rockefeller — the antithesis of the man we have been studying — a modest, retiring gentleman, loving his home and church and friends and spending his leisure in charity and golf. For forty years this other Mr. Rockefeller has been a model helpmate for the one whose acquaintance we have made. It is not easy to learn much of this other man, for there is probably not a public character in the United States whose private life is more completely concealed than is that of John D. Rockefeller. The same cloak is drawn over it as over his business life, and up to this time the law has never forced back the cloak as it has repeatedly from his business life. Mr. Rockefeller gives the world none of the chances to study him which most men of importance do. The club never sees him. He is almost never numbered among the banqueters at great celebrations. He never appears on the platform when men of public importance gather to discuss public questions or stimulate to action in public causes. His opinions on great issues are never quoted; that is, John D. Rockefeller has no part in that vital and important part of a citizen's duty which consists in meeting his fellows and by intimate personal intercourse keeping in contact with the ambitions and ideals of his times. Now, as thirty-five years ago when Mr. Rockefeller's business virtues were celebrated in "Cleveland Past and Present," he avoids "all honorary positions that cost time."

For several years Mr. Rockefeller has spent practically all of the year at one or another of his three homes — Forest Hill, a country place near Cleveland, Ohio, where he lives from May until October; his New York town house on Fifty-fourth Street or his great estate at Pocantico Hills, near Tarrytown-on-the-Hudson. It is fair to judge something of a man's character from his homes — particularly when the man is one who is freed from the necessity of considering cost in building. Mr. Rockefeller's homes force several reflections on one. Certainly they show his cult of the unpretentious. No one of the three houses he occupies has any claims to rank among the notable homes of the country. They are all unpretending even to the point of being conspicuous. Not only that, they show him to have no pleasure in noble architecture, to appreciate nothing of the beauty of fine lines and decorations. Mr. Rockefeller's favorite home, the house at Forest Hill is a monument of cheap ugliness — a great modern structure built in the first place as a sanitarium, it is amazing that any one not compelled to do so should live in its shadow. His city house is without distinction, and there has never been an appropriate mansion at Pocantico Hills.



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JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

FROM HIS LATEST PHOTOGRAPH

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

FROM GEORGE VARIAN'S LIFE SKETCH MADE IN CLEVELAND,
OCTOBER 11, 1903

But if Mr. Rockefeller knows nothing or at least cares nothing for beauty in buildings, he has the love of noble land. At Forest Hill the park of over four hundred acres is one of great loveliness — rolling wooded hills, shady ravines, fine fields, with splendid trees — the whole cared for with more than intelligence. There is something like affection gone into the making of this beautiful spot. His estate at Pocantico Hills beyond Tarrytown shows the same fine taste for broad fields and noble trees and great outlook.

And there is no doubt Mr. Rockefeller enjoys his land. When at Forest Hill and Pocantico Hills he may be seen almost daily playing golf or wheeling. Indeed he spends hours daily in the fresh air. His devotion to golf has even led one philosopher to argue with much show of reason as well as of humor that so long as golf occupied him as it does, there is little fear that Mr. Rockefeller will trouble himself to complete his ownership of the Nation. If Mr. Rockefeller played golf purely for pleasure, then those who fear him might indeed cease worrying. Taking it all in all, however, there is little doubt that Mr. Rockefeller's chief reason for playing golf is that he may live longer in order to make more money. "He has two ambitions," a life-long intimate of Mr. Rockefeller once said, "to be very old and to be very rich." He is sixty-six years old now. He worked for many years with an intensity which long ago ruined his digestion. To live and complete his ambition he was obliged to exercise much, and so we have Mr. Rockefeller spending a portion of every day in patiently following a ball that he may be very old and very rich.

The daily life on his great estates is studiously simple. Mr. Rockefeller regulates his household as he does his business. Family and servants are trained to strictest economy. There is no more gas burned than is needed, no unnecessary heating, no wasteful providing. There is nothing for display, nothing squandered in the senseless American way to prove you are rich, so rich you need not care. On every hand there is frugality and carefulness. And this frugality certainly is a welcome contrast to the wanton lavishness which on every side of us corrupts taste and destroys the sense of values. One would be inclined to like Mr. Rockefeller the better for his plain living if somehow one did not feel that here was something more than frugality — that here was parsimony — not only that, that here was parsimony made a virtue, and that one of the chief vanities of this "richest man in the world" is seeing how little he can spend on his household, as that of many another rich man is in seeing how much he can spend.

Mr. Rockefeller's modestly administered households have never been social centers of importance. Because of parsimony or for some other reason it is certain that Mr. Rockefeller has never exercised that broad hospitality which society has a right to expect of its leading citizens as it has a right to expect their services in efforts for social and political betterment. Beyond his intimate personal circle and his church and charity associates, Mr. Rockefeller seems to have no social life. Here is a man who has completed a commercial structure which he claims is a benefaction to the country — has worked out an organization which spreads literally all over the earth and whose representatives in many foreign lands are more influential, it is said, than the representatives of the United States; but this man has nothing to do with his peers in influence and achievement. He only meets them when there is business in it! Can it be that Mr. Rockefeller prefers not to meet his peers except when he has a use for them? Or does he have an uneasy feeling that after all he is not the peer of the men of achievement who do their work in the light and seek in their leisure stimulus and companionship among their fellows. "*He always begs my pardon when he starts to speak,*" said an eminent gentleman at one time thrown for several days into Mr. Rockefeller's society. Can it be that Mr. Rockefeller recognizes dimly in those great men of the world, among whom, from his position, we should expect him to seek his associates, certain ethical and intellectual qualities which he does not possess? Does Mr. Rockefeller feel vaguely that he is *not their equal*, that despite all his riches he is a crippled creature, and does he for this reason shrink from the open hospitality which must ever remain one of the obligations as it is one of the priveleges of great wealth? Is it for this reason he apologizes before addressing his peers? It may be so. It may be, too, that this vague consciousness that he *is* an inferior creature, bring him face to face with free, aspiring, achieving fellows, has helped bring the lines of pathos into his strange face.

Or the explanation may be simpler —and less appealing. It is quite possible, we may

even say quite probable, that Mr. Rockefeller no more recognizes an obligation of hospitality towards society, no more feels a need of the society of his peers than in business he recognizes the obligation to play fair or the need to preserve the respect of his fellows.

The only public place in which Mr. Rockefeller appears with any regularity is at the services of a Baptist church in the community where he happens to be living. He is particularly devoted to the services of the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church of Cleveland, and rarely from May to October does he miss the Sunday meetings, and he always appears at the annual Sunday-school picnic. Here he seems to be at his freest, here he even makes little speeches on occasions. And yet to one who from a pew watches Mr. Rockefeller in the bosom of his church, it seems as if the Sunday service can be nothing but an ordeal. The writer was once present at the annual October gathering in Mr. Rockefeller's Cleveland church where he says good-by for the season to the Sunday-school of which he is the honorary superintendent. He sat through the session of Sunday-school, his back to the wall (they say in Cleveland Mr. Rockefeller always sits with his back to the wall when it is possible. So many things can happen behind one's back in an assembly !) incessantly peering into the faces of those before him. No child in the assembly was so uneasy. Throughout the church service which followed, this same terrible restlessness agitated him. He sat bent forward in his pew, for a moment, his eyes intent on the speaker, then with a start he looked to his right searching the faces he could see, craning his neck to look backward. Then his eyes would turn again to the speaker. But not to stay there. A few moments later he was searching the aisles to his left, craning again to see behind him. Those who have observed Mr. Rockefeller in church over a long period of years say that he has shown this uneasiness for years. Unconscious habit, perhaps. Fear, fear of the oft-repeated threats of the multitude of sufferers from the wheels of the cars of progress he has rolled across the country, so many a man who knows him will say. It does not matter what it is. It is pitiful, so pitiful, that one cannot watch John Rockefeller sit through a church service and ever cease to feel that he is one of the saddest objects in the world. For what good this undoubted power of achievement, for what good this towering wealth, if one must be forever peering to see what is behind !

And yet Mr. Rockefeller is evidently pleased and satisfied in this "church home." It is evident he likes the deferential faces, the hands outstretched apologetically, the general obsequiousness. He likes to speak to the children, too, and does it in a modest way. His talks are the merest commonplace; expressions he learned forty years ago evidently, but they are uttered in a natural and rather agreeable voice, and with evident sincerity of feeling. The tenor of them is very like the following. In fact, many of the expressions he uses here are repeated again and again by him :

I regard my connection with this Sunday-school forty-nine years ago, as one of the most important, if not the most important action of my life. It is for this reason that I am always glad to come back to Cleveland, always happy to return to the scenes of my younger days, and to look upon the forces which are doing the greatest work in life. After it is all over, the religion of a man is his most important possession. And with that religion comes the accessories which it brings with it. The Sunday-school should be a place, not only where the word of God is taught, but from it should go influences which help each one to follow carefully in the footsteps of the Master.

There is nothing in this world that can compare with the Christian fellowship, nothing that can satisfy but Christ. It is the Sunday-school which can bring both. Christ is to be studied; and through an acquaintance with His life, and through His words which have been handed down to us, we only can learn of His love for us, the greatness of that love and sacrifice which led Him to the cross that we, His brothers, might live with Him forever.

We can never learn too much of His will towards us, too much of His messages and His advice. The Bible is His word and its study gives at once the foundation for our faith and an inspiration to battle onward in the fight against the tempter. We should learn more of His word, and the Sunday-school is the place where all may gather that knowledge of His great love for us that will turn our dark days into brightness, and furnish the glad light which should shine out from our lives as an inspiration for the despondent and heart-sick brother who finds the way of life hard to tread.

In our Sunday-school let us learn to repeat those passages which show forth best the beauties of holiness. Each class should be taught to repeat at will those inspired words. Passages of Scriptures should be as familiar to our children as are the lessons of education taught in day-schools. In some moment of their lives who knows but that the warning, the promise learned and understood in the Sunday-school, may prove to be the turning point in their lives and save some one from being turned away from the right and swept down the broad road to destruction.

And we are never too old to study the Bible. Each time the lessons are studied comes some new

meaning, some new thought which will make us better. Don't forsake the Sunday-school because you have reached years of maturity. Stick closer to it as the years pass by. Dig deeper into its truths. Make your place early in the Sunday-school, and let that place be filled by you as long as you live.

It is particularly gratifying to me after my absence to notice the signs of prosperity in the Sunday-school. The growth of the school has been exceptional, and I foresee in that growth the new beginning of a marvelous power for good in our city. This Sunday-school has been of help to me, greater perhaps than any other force in my Christian life, and I can ask no better things for you than that you, and all that shall come after you in this grand band of workers for Christ, shall receive the same measure of blessedness which I have been permitted to have.

At the session of the Sunday-school where the writer heard Mr. Rockefeller speak, he said among other things:

When you come to the church or to the Sunday-school and associate yourself with it you must put something into it. When the business men associate themselves together for the manufacture of these gas fixtures, or the window glasses or many of the things that we see about us, each man contributes some money for the joint undertaking. In proportion to what they put into this business do they receive returns from their investments, or dividends. The more they put in the more they receive in dividends.

Now it is not necessary that you put a great amount of money into this work that you are becoming a part of, but that the whole may accomplish the most it is necessary that each contribute something, be it money or what it may. Put something in. And according as you put something in the greater will be your dividends of salvation.

It was curious to note how firm Mr. Rockefeller's voice became when he began to talk of dividends. He was one speaking with authority. "You must put something in if you would take something out," he said with the curious gesture of Mr. Varian's sketch,* and as he said it we had for a brief moment the money-king in all his power and relentlessness. Indeed in all of Mr. Rockefeller's speeches of which trustworthy reports are obtainable the only parts which are not merely platitudinous are those dealing in some way with money.

Mr. Rockefeller himself is very modest about his speeches. One of the pleasantest tales we have of him is from a young reporter who had occasion to report one of his Sunday-school talks once. It gives a side of Mr. Rockefeller which few people see:

"One Saturday in June, 1898," the reporter relates, "the Cleveland afternoon papers said that John Rockefeller would speak the next day — Children's Sunday — in the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church. Being a 'cub' reporter on the *Plain Dealer* at the time, I was held by the city editor to be a fit person to send out on an early Sunday morning assignment — to a Sunday-school.

"The church was filled when I got there. But an usher whom I knew put me on an empty bench right in front of the pulpit. I looked for Mr. Rockefeller, but I could n't find him. He was n't on the platform. The people sang, the minister prayed, and the little folks gave recitations. After a while the pastor said the children would now listen to their beloved superintendent. A man who sat in a pew near the front stepped forward, stood directly in front of me, and began to speak. I took from my pocket a tablet, and, being able to write shorthand, began to take the address verbatim. Mr. Rockefeller saw what I was doing. He spoke as any inexperienced speaker does — nervously. His nervousness was betrayed by slowly uttered sentences, some of which were repeated, and by short quick stops. He talked for a few moments only — simply expressing pleasure at being among old friends and with the children. I think everybody was satisfied and pleased with what he said. When he had finished he dropped into a place by my side. Presently he leaned over and whispered to me: 'Will you wait a moment after the service? I should like to see you.'

"At the close of the services he greeted a few friends and then took me into a committee room. He asked me whether I was a reporter, what paper I was on, and whether I had his remarks verbatim. Then he reasoned with me in this manner: 'Now, you know, I am not an experienced speaker. I have done little of that sort of thing. I suppose my address was not very good. It was n't an address — just a little talk. I wish you would say little about it. And don't print that speech in full, please. Mercy, no! Make it simple, short. Fix it up.' And he laughed and I laughed. And he took hold of my arm, and behaved like a 'good fellow.' I said that I had no desire to write nonsense about him — and I had n't. I told him that my city editor would n't print a silly yarn about his slender abilities as a speaker if I wrote it — and I knew he would n't. I said that I had taken his speech in shorthand

* See McClure's Magazine for July, 1905, page 226.

simply because I could, because I got fun out of exercising my skill — and that was true.

"So I went to the office and wrote up a quiet account of the meeting. I fixed up the speech. I did not, however, escape the sin of putting into my story the fact that I saw him put a twenty-dollar bill on the contribution plate. That was because I was a 'cub.' I think Mr. Rockefeller was much annoyed when he saw me make notes after the deacon passed the plate to him and me on the bench.

"Two months later a suburban electric car upon which I was a passenger stopped a couple of miles from Forest Hill — Mr. Rockefeller's East Cleveland home. Mr. Rockefeller and his son came aboard, and took seats behind me. Just as young Mr. Rockefeller told the conductor to stop at Forest Hill, some one touched me on the shoulder. I rose and turned to meet the eyes of Mr. Rockefeller, and his outstretched hand. 'Well,' he said, 'you are the young man who wrote up my speech for the *Plain Dealer* down at the church on Children's Day. I thought it was you when I sat down. Well, newspaper men generally treat me rudely. Thank you very much for what you did. I read it and appreciated it. You fixed that speech up so it was all right — first rate. Thank you. Good day.'"

Devoted as he is to his church, Mr. Rockefeller makes much more impression by his charities which are indeed one expression of his religion. Mr. Rockefeller has always held that methodical giving was a part of a Christian's duty. Again and again he has stated this view in his Sunday-school talks. "I believe it is a religious duty to get all the money you can fairly and honestly," he told his young men one day, "to keep all you can and to give away all you can." "Will they (the people of the future) say of us, we accumulated wealth," he remarked in a little Cleveland address a few years ago. "No, that will be all forgotten. They will want to know what we did with it. Did we spend it for the benefit of our fellow-men. Of that we ought to think." Such expressions are often on his tongue. They are but reflections of his practice for fifty years. Never since the time when he was accustomed to enter in "Ledger A" "10 cents for foreign missions," "12 cents for Five Points Mission," has he failed in methodical giving. It is evident that his giving is governed by some theory of the per cent due the Lord, though it is evident that he never has gone as high as ten per cent! Whatever the percentage he has decided on he distributes it cautiously and reverentially, and it is not probable that he often exceeds it, for those who have dealings with Mr. Rockefeller in charities frequently are met with the plea "I cannot afford it." The spirit in which he gives is one of plain, hard duty. It is an investment on which he has determined, an investment in the Kingdom of Heaven; and he means to get all possible out of it. He himself has stated his theory — "According as you put something in, the greater will be your dividends of salvation!"

In his earlier days Mr. Rockefeller and his family looked after his charities and it is said, that his children are carefully trained to his own scientific methods of doing good. In later years his charities have become so extensive and the appeals to him so numerous, that Mr. Rockefeller has been obliged to build up what may be called a Charity Bureau at 26 Broadway, for handling applications and disbursing funds.

The range of his giving is very wide. It may be said to begin with the distribution of Mr. Rockefeller's own cast-off clothing. There is a well-authenticated case, dating back only a few years, of a partly worn pair of shoes sent to a less fortunate friend with a personal note from Mr. Rockefeller. Nothing, nothing must be wasted in this matter of charity any more than in an oil refinery. Property is all sacred. To waste is wicked, and so whether it be a bequest of a million dollars or a pair of cast-off shoes it must all be put where its full value will be employed. "I have known Mr. Rockefeller to give away a hundred thousand dollars on a demand he believed worthy, and turn around and haggle over the price of a ton of coal," a life-long intimate said once.

There is no doubt that his charities are many of them personal and never known outside of his immediate circle. There are three or four old ladies in Cleveland, friends of his youth, to whom he gives a monthly income. Unfortunate Baptist ministers, worn-out teachers and missionaries in great numbers are helped by him, while the poor of all grades receive much direct help. Of course he gives much to his church, but he has never made any church the object of affectionate and lavish giving. He seems never to have been willing to give more than what he considered his share. One would

imagine that Mr. Rockefeller would enjoy making of the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church of Cleveland which he has so often declared to be the church of his heart — a temple of beauty and splendor — a fit offering unto the Lord. One would imagine that for a man of his professions there could be no greater happiness than to build in Cleveland a noble structure, fill it with inspiring art, give it great music and put into its pulpit a virile intellect; but Mr. Rockefeller does not see it that way. He gives his proportion. That satisfies the requirements of duty. As for giving for the joy of making the world more beautiful, for the sake of the delight of sheer generosity — he knows nothing of these things. More 's the pity for him!

Mr. Rockefeller's private charities and his gifts to the church must have aggregated to a very great sum in the forty-five years that he has been giving so methodically, but it is small compared with the money he has given for education and for medical research. His chief object of interest is Chicago University, an institution "founded by John D. Rockefeller," according to the letter-heads of that institution. The total sum he has given to Chicago University is about $15,000,000, distributed as follows:

Endowment	$ 8,008,249.70
Building and furnishings	1,516,823.80
Additional lands and campus improvements	1,875,778.91
Current expenses	3,372,882.41
Books and publications	124,500.00
Equipment, collections, etc.	117,322.00
Total	$15,015,556.82

Besides this fifteen millions given to Chicago Mr. Rockefeller has distributed some seven millions among other institutions, ranging from $25,000 to the William Jewell University to $1,375,000 to Barnard College. Mr. Rockefeller's interest in medical work is almost as great as in education. The Rush Medical College has received $6,000,000 from him. His gift of $5,000,000 to Johns Hopkins Hospital to help it out of the embarrassment caused by the Baltimore fire is still fresh in mind. He has given several hundred thousand to the Y. M. C. A. He has given the Baptist Missionary Society about one million.

It has been computed that Mr. Rockefeller's entire gifts, public and private charities, have amounted to about $36,000,000. It would be fair to call the aggregate $40,000,000, and that would probably do Mr. Rockefeller full justice. It is not a great sum considering Mr. Rockefeller's vast income. Probably his dividends from the Standard Oil Company alone in the last three years would cover it. And the Standard Oil Company is only one of Mr. Rockefeller's dividend earners.

It is quite probable, that the man would give more money if he could give it, without doing, from his point of view, more harm than good. He hates waste and shiftlessness. He must have seen long ago that money given freely is more often than not administered carelessly. He must have seen how charity to individuals often engenders dependence, ruins self-reliance. He must have come to understand that lavish giving is a terrible social menace, injuring the self-respect of recipients, fostering greed for more. He must have learned that one of the most difficult things in this world is to give so that it will not corrupt and weaken. It is generally said by Mr. Rockefeller's friends that it is such consideration as well as his abhorrence of waste that has led him to establish the "Charity Bureau" at 26 Broadway which investigates before giving, and which in many cases audits annually the accounts of institutions which have taken his money. If Mr. Rockefeller thinks on these things and the care with which he scrutinizes his gifts, would lead one to think he does, may he not come to realize finally the utter impossibility of justifying by charity the injustice which such an accumulation as his has cost? To-day he can not give away more than a pittance of his great total income without doing harm. In a few years he will die and the colossus he has erected will be left to others to administer. Can they do better than he has done? Impossible. May not Mr. Rockefeller come to see finally that the injustice and wrong it takes to build such a fortune as his are only equalled by the weakened manhood and the stimulated greed engendered in its spending? Is it too much to hope thatMr. Rockefeller may finally understand how much more good he would have done the world if, thirty-five years ago, he had turned his great ability to bringing order with justice into the industry in which he was the leader, instead of bringing order with injustice. How many more men he would have helped if he had set his face towards equalizing opportunities instead

of restricting them. Is it too much to hope that even Mr. Rockefeller will see, at last, that what we need in society is not charity but fair play, and that he who attempts to substitute the one for the other handles a sword which deals fatal blows in two directions. It may even be that it is because Mr. Rockefeller has begun to see vaguely that he will never, never be able to give away enough to drown the wrong he has done that his face has taken on its terrible pathos.

Here then is the other Mr. Rockefeller, as the world sees him, a quiet, modest church-going gentleman, devoted to Sunday-school picnics, golf, and wheeling, whose evenings are never spent in anything more exciting than a game of numerico, washed down by a glass of cider, whose chief occupation, outside of business, is giving away as much money as he can without its doing more harm than good, whose chief pleasure is in fine fields and trees, in flowers and gardening, whose smile is friendly for young and old, who welcomes old friends, who adores his grandchildren, and who meets criticism and misrepresentation by quoting the meek doggerel:

There is so much bad in the best of us,
There is so much good in the worst of us,
That it scarcely behooves any of us
To talk about the rest of us.

It is a rare "other self." But how harmonize it with the Mr. Rockefeller the business world knows, the man with a mask and a steel grip, forever peering into hidden places for money, always more money; planning in secret to wrest it from even his friends, never forgetting, never resting, never satisfied. Is the amiable Mr. Rockefeller a foil for the man before whom the public writhes? Does Mr. Rockefeller know that modesty, benevolence, and piety are the tricks which deceive the most people the longest time? Does Mr. Rockefeller know that, when he patiently points how gentle, charitable, and devoted he is, and asks how can it be that a man who is all this can do a business wrong, more people will hesitate and keep silent than before any other face he could present? It is supposing a great knowledge of human nature and a still greater power as an actor so to explain Mr. Rockefeller, but that it *is* a plausible explanation cannot be denied.

Or is Mr. Rockefeller true to himself in both his rôles? Does he believe that money is a paramount duty, a sort of higher law justifying law-breaking, falsehood and extortion? Does he believe that the good his gentler self can do by charity, and in wise bequests to hospitals and to colleges, with the money thus obtained more than balances the harm its accumulation works? That is, does the end justify the means, in Mr. Rockefeller's opinion, so that he can unflinchingly face his own record and say, "I am right." Is it the inner consciousness of his own righteousness that keeps him silent before a sneering public?

It may be so. Or it may be that Mr. Rockefeller is one of those double natures that puzzle the psychologist. A man whose soul is built like a ship in air-tight compartments to use the familiar figure — one devoted to business, one to religion and charity, one to simple living and one to nobody knows what. But between these compartments there are no doors. The life that goes on in compartment I has no relation to that of compartment II, has no influence upon it. Each is a solitary unit. It is an uncanny explanation, but it may be the true one.

Hypocrite, intriguer, freak of nature, it is not for us to say. The point is, that for the student interested in finding out what effect a certain career has on the public, Mr. Rockefeller is a hypocrite. The great public does not deal in nice psychological distinctions. It takes the facts at hand and goes straight to the evident conclusion. It says this man has for forty years lent all the power of his great ability to perpetuating and elaborating a system of illegal and unjust discrimination by common carriers. He has done this in the face of moral sentiment, in the face of loudly expressed public opinion, in face of the law, in the face of the havoc his operations caused at his very side. For forty years he has fought to prevent every attempt to regulate the wrongs the system wrought, and when he failed to do so he has turned his craft and skill to finding secret and devious ways of securing the privileges he desired. He has done more than any other person to fasten on this country the most serious interference with free individual development which it suffers, an interference which, today, the whole country is struggling vainly to strike off, which it is doubtful will be cured, so deep-seated and so subtle is it, except by revolutionary methods.

Not only this, he has fought the publicity in business which is obviously necessary to

its safety; he has introduced into business a spy system of the most odious character. He has turned commerce from a peaceful pursuit to war, and honeycombed it with cruel and corrupt practice; turned competition from honorable emulation to cutthroat struggle. And the man who deliberately and persistently does these things calls his great organization a benefaction, and points to his church-going and his charities as proof of his righteousness. To the man of straightforward nature the two will not tally. This, he says, is supreme, cruel wrong-doing cloaked by religion. There is but one name for it — hypocrisy.

It is not only the man in the street who feels the hypocrisy of the case; it is the man in the school of business Mr. Rockefeller has created, the man in the train of obsequious followers his giving has collected. And what is the effect? Why, to make hypocrites of them — hypocrites or cynics! On all sides we hear the justification of the practices of this school by its deeds of charity. A few years ago we heard it in the very Senate of the United States when Senator Payne of Ohio under the shadow of the charge that his seat was bought by the money of the Standard Oil Company made in substance the defense that the Standard Oil Company could not have bought his seat, because a few years before "no institution, no association, no combination in my district did more to bring about my defeat and went to so large an expense in money to accomplish it"—and, having accused thus the Company of using money in politics, practically justified them for whatever they might do by pleading: "they are very liberal in their philanthropic contributions to charities and benevolent works, and I venture the assertion that two gentlemen in that company have donated more money for philanthropic and benevolent purposes than all the Republican members of the Senate put together!"

Not long ago one of the most finished products of the Rockefeller Business School, when the question of investigating certain serious charges against a chief justice of the State of New York was up — charges which the honor of the Court demanded should be investigated — opposed the proposition and the basis of his opposition, was Scriptural: *Let him who has not sinned cast the first stone*, a degradation of the noble doctrine of Christian charity which would be ludicrous if it were not so impious. But it is an interpretation of the doctrine frequent enough. On all sides we hear men deep in trickery and spoils quoting "judge not, that ye be not judged." On all sides the pulpit makes this defense — or keeps silent, which is equivalent. The same man who once in a moment of genuineness said to the writer, "I have been in business with John D. Rockefeller thirty-five years, and he would do me out of a dollar to-day — *that is if he could do it honestly*," defended Mr. Rockefeller's reputation as a hypocrite — which he acknowledged — by saying, "But how often in this world a man's reputation and his real character are different — we have one eminent example — the case of our Lord and Saviour." Cant? Not in the Rockefeller School of Business. It is the doctrine of the school.

There are happily plenty of men, who follow the methods and practices of this school, who either are too frank by nature or have too large a sense of humor to accept the doctrine of justification by Scriptural quotation. They say bluntly: "Business is n't a Sunday-school, and Sunday-school teachings have nothing to do with it. Whatever is necessary to win we are going to do. We are not in business for our health, but are out for the dollars." And they scheme for rebates, and bribe legislatures for franchises, and shun their taxes, and water their stock, and unload worthless securities on the market, and support open swindling schemes with the sangfroid and frankness of South Sea pirates. The black flag openly flaunted is certainly less dangerous and less odious than a religious banner. But still it is not reassuring to know that so large a number of our commercial leaders go about their daily bucaneering with their tongues in their cheeks and a defiant "What are you going to do about it" on their lips.

Rich indeed should be the returns to the public for what it has cost to build up a fortune like Mr. Rockefeller's. But what has Mr. Rockefeller given the public in return for the code of business principles he has taught it, in return for the havoc their enforcement has cost, in return for the hypocrisy and cynicism he has fostered? A great business organization — one of the greatest the world has ever seen — a demonstration of the possibilities of combination. True, but to build his organization he was obliged to perpetuate and expand, secretly, by force, bribery and trickery a vicious business system the country at large was striving to overthrow, and

whose perpetuation and expansion has brought us into one of the most serious public situations since the Civil War. Has that paid?

Perfected methods of oil transportation, refining and marketing — yes, but these methods were *not* his invention. They were the invention of those who sought to live free of his domination, and which he seized by force and strategy when they had been proved to be valuable. Is it for the good of the commerce of the community that the men who possess the blood and courage of the pioneer or the brains of the inventor should be discouraged and suppressed by being deprived of a fair share of the profits of their labors?

Cheap oil? Mr. Rockefeller's fundamental reason for forming his first combination was to keep *up* the price of oil. It has been forced down by the inventions and discoveries of his competitors. He has never lowered it a point if it could be avoided, and in times of public stress he has taken advantage of the very misery of the poor to demand higher prices. Nobody has yet forgotten the raising of the price of oil in the coal famine of 1902. Even the coal barons themselves in that winter combined to see that the poor of the great cities received their little bags of coal promptly and at reasonable prices and in preference to rich patrons. But the price of oil and the price of oil-stoves went up. Does it pay the public to trust the control of a great necessity of life to such a man?

He has built hospitals and colleges and endowed schools. True, and those helped have become his open apologists, by taking what they call the "large view" or the "charitable view," or by deliberately shunning a consideration of the subject, quietly not seeing in it a topic for discussion. Does it pay to have those who are entrusted with the very sources of our intellectual and moral life blinded or silenced to the ethical quality of the practices of our daily life? Will it pay our colleges to put over their doors the teaching of one of our present-day moralists, "Never discuss politics or religion if you would succeed."

He has led a life devoted to charity and the church. True. And the principles of the religion he professes are so antagonistic to the principles of the business he practises that the very world which emulates him has been turned into hypocrites and cynics under his tutelage. While, in the world which looks on, charity itself has become hateful to many a man — a cloak to cover a multitude of sins. Others actually withdraw their bequests from institutions which accept his funds. (It has been stated on the best authority that three wills making bequests to one of our leading universities have been changed because this institution has accepted money from Mr. Rockefeller.) Not only has charity been tainted by the hypocrisy of his life, the church itself has been polluted and many a man has turned away from its doors because of the servile support it gives to the men of whom Mr. Rockefeller is the most eminent type. Does all this pay?

There is no shirking the answer. It does *not* pay. Our national life is on every side distinctly poorer, uglier, meaner for the kind of influence he exercises. From him we have received no impulse to public duty, only lessons in evading it for private greed; no stimulus to nobler ideals, only a lesson in the further deification of gold; no example of enlarged and noble living, only one of concealment and evasion; no impulse to free thinking, only a lesson in obscuring vital ethical issues by dressing them in the garbs of piety and generosity. None of those higher things which the public has a right to demand from the man to whom it permits great power are returned to it by Mr. Rockefeller. For Mr. Rockefeller has none of these things to give. He has nothing but money, and never was there a more striking example of the impotency of money! He has neither taste nor cultivation, ideals nor potent personality. He is not a great man, not a human man. He is a machine — a money machine — stripped by his overwhelming passion of greed of every quality which makes a man worthy of citizenship. He has not made good. He cannot make good. It is not in him. He has nothing the aspiring world needs. On the contrary, that for which he does stand is a menace to our free development not only or chiefly our free development in commerce, but, vastly more important, our free development in citizenship and in morals.

Were Mr. Rockefeller the only one of his kind he would be curious, interesting, unpleasant, but in no way vital. For he would be but temporary — a puzzling and pitiful monstrosity fit for Lombroso. Were he the only one, there certainly would be no justification of the brutality inherent in such a study as this. But Mr. Rockefeller is not

the only one of his kind. He is simply the type preëminent in the public mind of the militant business man of the day. From bankers down to street venders we have in operation the code which he has worked out so perfectly, and to which he has given the sanction of piety. And this code, so repugnant to the sense of fair play and so demoralizing to intellectual honesty, has worked its way into every activity of life, until with a growing element of the country success is the justification of any practice, until no price is too great to pay for winning. In commerce "the interest of the business" justifies breaking the law, bribing legislators, defrauding a competitor of his rights. In politics, winning the election justifies supporting an Addicks, breaking international laws, enduring slanders, bribing voters. In athletics you may break an opponent's collar-bone if it will win the game for your team. In church and college you may close your mouth to national demoralization if it will bring you endowments. On every side of us the Rockefeller practice of separating morals strictly from the business in hand is winning adherents and defenders. On every side it is ceasing to be "practical" to consider the ethical quality of a transaction which it is believed will contribute to success. On every side it is "indiscreet," "unkind," "bad form," to mention these unpleasant facts.

It is this threatening saturation of all forms of American life with commercial Machiavellism which forces a study of John D. Rockefeller on those interested in our ethical and intellectual tendencies. He symbolizes the thing — is, as far as we can see, the very essence of the thing. Admit him to be the unconscious victim of his time — the inevitable result of the qualities he inherited — or did not inherit — explain him as you will, justify him if you can, there still remains the fact so tragic for Mr. Rockefeller that he is the fou der of a creed charged with poison. With what weapon is society to meet the exponent of a corrupting creed but analysis, ruthless and unflinching. It is only the courage and thoroughness with which she has studied and labeled her own products that has ever helped her to improve these products. Since the world began her progress has been in proportion to her knowledge and her judgment of the men who symbolized the influences of a period. History is but a museum of dissected heroes, warriors, kings, philosophers, their records stripped bare, their influences traced to their flowering. Sooner or later every man who has left a stamp finds his way to the cruel table, his place in the melancholy galleries. Mr. Rockefeller much as he dislikes the light cannot escape the fate of his own greatness. All his vast wealth spent in one supreme effort to evade the judgment of men would be but wasted, for a man can never escape the judgment of the society which has bred him, and the greater the power to which he has risen the stronger the light in which he must finally and eternally rest.

RUSKIN ON JUDAS ISCARIOT

"We do great injustice to Iscariot in thinking him wicked above all common wickedness. He was only a common money-lover, and, like all money-lovers, did n't understand Christ. . . . He did n't want Him to be killed. He was horror-struck when he found that Christ would be killed; threw his money away instantly, and hanged himself. How many of our present money-seekers, think you, would have the grace to hang themselves, whoever was killed? But Judas was a common, selfish, muddle-headed, pilfering fellow. . . . He did n't understand Christ; yet believed in Him much more than most of us do; had seen Him do miracles, thought He was quite strong enough to shift for Himself, and he, Judas, might as well make his own little by-perquisites out of the affair. . . . Now, that is the money-seeker's idea all over the world. He does n't hate Christ, but. . . . does n't care for Him — sees no good in that benevolent business; makes his own little job out of it at all events, come what will. And thus, out of every mass of men, you have a certain number of bag-men. . . . whose main object is to make money. And they do make it — make it in all sorts of unfair ways, chiefly by the weight and force of money itself, or what is called the power of capital. . . . That is the modern Judas's way of 'carrying the bag,' and 'bearing what is put therein.'"

— From "The Crown of Wild Olive."

THE STEADY

BY

HARVEY J. O'HIGGINS

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ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN SLOAN

MARY KLINE came out the door of the "Paulist" Church and paused at the top of the steps between two sculptured saints whose sandstone halos looked like Japanese flat hats shading their tonsures from the brilliant sunlight. It was Sunday morning, and the brightness of the holiday only made its emptiness more glaring to her, for she faced the prospect of spending it shut in her room, resting in a dull apathy after her week's work behind the glove counter of a department store.

She waited for the others of the congregation to disappear in the cross streets. She did not wish to meet any of them. Her father and her home life were the joke of the quarter, and her inward shame of that condition made her carry herself with a resentful pride among her neighbors. The boys called her "Frosty Mame." She kept aloof from the gossiping friendships of the girls.

She stood — tall, strong-shouldered, red-haired, and wholesomely freckled — gathering up her skirt absent-mindedly, and gazing down the avenue. The sunlight lay bleaching the sidewalk stones in a depressing Sabbath silence. An elevated train thundered emptily overhead. She watched its shadow flick past her on the flagstones and flutter away up the vista of the street. She saw a young man detach himself from a lamp-post at the corner, and come towards her, his head down, looking sheepishly at his feet. She started when she recognized him.

"Well," she said, going down the steps, "if you ain't got the nerve!" He fumbled at the brim of his derby, red with embarrassment. "How 'd you know you 'd find me *here?*"

He laughed excitedly. "I took a chance on it."

"I guess you did! How 'd you know I was a Cath'lic at all?"

"I saw the string of your scap'lars one day in the car."

"Well, you ain't as slow as I thought you were. . . . How long 've you been waiting?"

He looked down guiltily. "Just a little while," he lied. "I — I thought you 'd like to go some place — maybe."

His tone was shyly appealing. She thought a moment. "Oh!" she said "Where to?"

"Over to the Park?"

He brought it out with such an effect of daring to propose the impossible that she felt bound by his expectation to object. "What for?"

His cheeks were hollow behind the corner muscles of a wistful, Irish mouth; his eyes, deep-set under black eyebrows, were as brown and soft as a girl's. She watched his confusion amusedly. He faltered: "Ju-just for a walk."

"Ain't it going to rain?"

"'Fair and warmer,' the paper says."

"Oh!" She laughed. "All right."

He had evidently planned the expedition with elaborate forethought. She was curious to know who he was; and in that curiosity there was the little thrill of a desire to understand what the attraction was that drew him to her.

They had seen each other several times on the elevated railroad train that brought them home from their work. The men from the downtown wholesale quarter always filled all the seats and kept their eyes fixed on their newspapers in ostentatious unconsciousness of the girls — later comers from the retail

shopping district — who had to stand crushed against the knees of the sitters, clinging in patient weariness to the hand straps. But he, though he usually had a seat near the door of the first car, never had a newspaper, because he always waited to pick up a discarded one after the train had discharged some of its passengers at the uptown stations; and he had several times given up his seat to her without winning more than a curt nod of acknowledgment. Then, one day, when a warm rain was sluicing down the car

"'Don't you want — th' umbrella?'"

windows, and rattling on the roof — and he had an umbrella and she had none — he followed her out at Sixty-sixth Street and caught up to her at the foot of the station stairway. He asked her hoarsely: "Don't you want — th' umbrella?" She regarded him askance, without turning, and with a look that took him in piece by piece, from his sunburned straw hat to his clumsy rubbers. "I guess you 'll want it yourself," she replied shortly. He held it out to her. "You can have it," he said. "I have n't got far to go." She frowned. "How 'll you get it back?" He muttered that the next time she saw him she could give it to him. "On the cars?" "Yes." "Where d' you live?" "Columbus — near a Hunderd-and-third." "What 'd you get off here for?" He swallowed and looked miserable; he did not answer. She eyed him. The rain was blowing in on them. "Hurry on," she said. "Put it up." He opened the umbrella and offered it to her. She shook her head. "Come on."

He stepped out blindly with her into the open; and, between her superior height and his nervous stumbling, they made an awkward business of crossing the Boulevard. He came down with a jolt off one curbstone, and he struck his foot against the other on the opposite side of the road. A rib-point of the umbrella knocked her hat askew, but she did not speak; she felt more like laughing. She did not understand that his knees had weakened under him, and that the pavement, though it looked level to her, seemed to him to be slanting uphill under his toes and catching them. He coughed once tentatively, but he did not find his voice. She stopped at her doorway. "Good-night," she said curtly. He let her out from under the umbrella, stammered "Th-thanks!" and hurried away up the avenue as fast as he could go.

If she had seen him walking the wet two miles to his room — with the dazzled smile of a man who has had a romantic adventure of love — she would not have been so contemptuously sure that she had discouraged him. His diffidence was like that cowardice which carries the volunteer, in an agony of nervousness, into the thickest of the battle. It never kept him from attempting anything which his desire suggested; it only made him blind with fright while he was doing it.

The next time they met — some days later, in the train — he rose at once to give her his seat, and she refused it; and while he was blushing and protesting that he would rather stand, a heavy laborer shoved past him and sat down. He asked the man to get up. "That 's her — I was giving that seat to this lady," he explained. The laborer raised an insolent eye as he turned the page of his soiled newspaper. "'S all right, sonny," he said. "No reserved seats in this car, I guess." The boy began to shake. "Get up," he said huskily. "That 's her seat." The man grunted and sat back to read. Then, with a little frightened gulp, he clutched the big fellow's hat and jumped back with it to the open door. "You give her that seat," he gasped. The laborer sprang at

"he clutched the big fellow's hat and jumped back with it to the open door"

him. Two men jumped to their feet and intervened. The women screamed. The conductor flung in on them. . . . And when the quarrel was settled, she was in the seat, he had gone forward to the other end of the car, and the man was on the back platform growling and cursing at the conductor.

The incident embarrassed her, and for the next few days she avoided him; but on Saturday she was so tired that she pushed her way into the front car with the self-confessed hope of finding him still ready to act the cavalier; and when he jumped up at sight of her, the smile with which she welcomed the offer of his seat was so unexpectedly grateful that he backed away, like a child with a gift, to gloat over it where she could not see him. As she passed him on her way out, she bowed. When she was gone, he got himself out on the platform — where there was more air — and leaned his elbows on the gate and smiled at the foliage of Central Park showing down the side streets.

A moment later, his eyes had fixed on the glimpses of that foliage in a fascinated glitter, and he had begun to tremble in the clutch of a new accession of daring. He saw himself walking under those trees with her.

And here, now, the impossible had come to pass: he was walking with her up the Mall, in that crowded Eden of Sunday lovers, under the arch of elms whose branches met overhead — like the groined roof of a Gothic aisle — rustling. The breezes came in warm from the lawns and smelling of the blond sunshine in that green cloister of coolness. Her skirt fluttered against his ankles. Sometimes, she even brushed against his arm.

It was a swishy black skirt with little tassels hanging from the braid trimmings; and she wore a fresh shirt-waist with a green necktie; and over the brim of her black hat a green feather curled gaudily. He was glad that he had put on his Sunday serge, although it was worn shiny over his elbows and his shoulder-blades — and the backs of the legs were polished so smooth with sitting that on the Sabbath-day he had always to strike his matches on the heel of his shoe.

"Sure!" he was saying. "I used to be one of the sanctu'ry boys with the Paulists — before I got fired out. They drop the grease on your head when you're all carrying candles in the processions — like Corpus Christi — and they got a trick, too, of bumping you when you go to make a genuflection, so 's you 'll fall over on your hands and knees.

"'She's got a steady!'"

I got fired for punching one of them that did that to me."

"The little beggars!" she said, understanding that they had persecuted him.

"I guess girls 're diff'rent."

"Yes, they *are!*" she replied ironically. "They tattle and tell lies about you. They ain't so rough, but they 're meaner. . . . You ain't been living down this way for a long time, have you?"

He had been telling her all about himself with a nervous volubility — as if he thought to establish a better acquaintance with her by making her familiar with his past. His name was "Jimmy" Gleason. His father had kept a small dry-goods store on Amsterdam Avenue until his death; and then the widow had managed it, until the opening of a department store in the next block had "spoiled the bus'ness." She had sold out and moved uptown to live on the little money she had saved; and she had died there, the year after he "went to work." He had added to the money she had left him; he was going to "open a place" of his own when he got enough capital. He had no relatives that he knew of — and no friends in the quarter in which he had been born. "We did n't seem to get along with any of them down there."

"Why?"

"I don't know. Mother used to say we were n't that sort of Irish anyway. We came from Dublin."

She did not catch the significance of that reference to the antagonism of the days of "the Pale." She said: "Well, I don't know where *we're* from, but I don't get along with them either. I guess we won't fight about that."

She saw, in the crowd, some girls who knew her. She heard one of them say: "She's got a steady!" And she was glad they did not know him. They could not carry tales to him about her father; they could not spoil that look in his eyes.

It was shining in them when he invited her to have a dish of ice-cream, and she accepted graciously. "What kind d' you like best?" he asked.

"Oh . . . strawberry."

"Do you!" He smiled over it, as if it were a revelation.

"Don't *you?*"

"I don't know," he reflected. "I gen'rally take choc'late."

"Why?"

He looked puzzled. "I don't know. I guess I like strawberry better, now I come to think of it."

"Do you!" She laughed gaily.

They went down the steps to the Terrace restaurant — suddenly sobered by the callous scrutiny of the waiters — and took an empty table facing the plash of the fountain and the breeze from the lake. They ordered two dishes of "strawberry"; and it seemed to him that it was the first time he had ever eaten ice-cream. "Ain't it better than choc'late?" she asked him.

He blushed as he looked up to meet her question. He was full of a heart-choking confusion of affection that made him love strawberry ice-cream with a passionate fondness beyond words. He looked down at the pink cone melting in his saucer, and saw it through a mist of tenderness. He wanted to tell her — he did not know what. He blinked and gulped. "It — it 's great," he said hoarsely.

She smiled at him. She liked him better without his hat; he had a good forehead. The wind had blown a lock of his light brown hair down on his temple, and she felt a motherly desire to put it back for him. It was, perhaps, more a desire of the hand than of the thought — a feeling in her palm that his

forehead would be cool and smooth to the touch. She asked him where he worked.

They finished their cream while he was telling her about his duties in the wholesale dry-goods house where he had been able to get a position because of his father's connection with the trade. And when they rose from their places, he was more at his ease again. "Would n't you like to see the menag'rie?" he said, as they returned up the steps.

She would rather have avoided the crowd, but she was too proud to admit, even to herself, that she shrank from meeting her acquaintances; besides, he had told her so much about himself that she felt an obligation to return his confidences in kind — which she did not wish to do — and perhaps the menagerie would give them other things to talk about. "Uh-huh. I like animals," she said. "Don't you?"

"Sure," he agreed. "I used to have an old canary that 'd belonged to my mother." He paused on a picture of the little old woman, sitting sewing at the window — with her old gaunt-stalked geraniums that never blossomed, and her old, blind canary that never sang. "*She* was," he said. "When we lived on a Hunderd-and-tenth Street, she used to go over and feed the squirr'ls ev'ry time it snowed hard."

"I meant in menageries," she put in hastily, having a very different picture of her own mother in her mind.

"Oh — like the monkeys. Yes. Let 's get some peanuts for them."

"All right!"

He bought a pint of nuts from one of the boys in uniform who were selling them along the Mall; and they turned down the side path into the hollow in which the Menagerie is sheltered. She helped herself from the bag which he held out to her. "I guess I 'm the monkey that 'll get most of these," she said.

He crowed boyishly. "Me too!"

He cracked the nuts in one hand, and carried the bag open for her in the other, until she said: "Put it in your pocket — on this side. I can get them." Then they went along together in the stream of sightseers, ruminating silently, and he tingled as if his coat were a sensitive part of him whenever he felt her fumbling in his pocket. She was so busy with her thoughts that she put her hand in when his was there; he withdrew it as hastily, as if the touch of her fingers had burned him. Then, while they were crushed together in passing the donkey-stand, she groped in the bulging pocket again, and he put his hand in too; and she awoke from her

"'Ain't it better than choc'late?'"

reverie to find him holding her fingers. She disengaged them nervously.

He felt a cold perspiration trickling down behind his ears.

When he looked at her again, it was with such a faltering timidity that she relented; and the next time he sought a peanut, she followed him, and reassured him with a friendly touch that lingered long enough to let him know it was not accidental. Something in his face reminded her of the way he had stammered "Th-thanks!" — leaving her at her door in the rain — and she colored at the thought of how she had snubbed him there.

She was still blushing when she looked aside at a group of children teasing a man on a bench which she was passing — and recognized her father, sitting in a weak huddle, with his battered hat tilted down on his eyes, trying to push it back off his forehead, while a boy behind him tipped it down again every time he raised it. He was smiling foolishly at the shouts and laughter of the children. She heard Gleason ask her: "What 's the matter?" She could not answer. She could not move. The boy suddenly crushed the hat down with both hands; her father fought weakly with the brim of it, his hand shaking; she clutched Gleason's arm and gasped: "It 's — he 's —— "

She swayed as Gleason sprang away from her, to scatter the children and bend down over the man. "What 's the matter?" He took off the hat and straightened out the dents in it. "What 's your name? Where d' you live?"

She pulled his coat-sleeve, and when he turned and saw her face, he understood. "Take him home," she said bitterly. "It 's my father."

He stepped between her and the bench instinctively, to hide the truth from her. "Go on ahead," he said. "I' ll fetch him. He 's — he 's all right." He put his hand on her arm to turn her. She drew back with a little sob, and hurried away up the path, stumbling, in blind haste, to hide herself in her room.

He did not see her again until late that evening. He had spent a desperate afternoon, biting his finger-nails like a convict, in his cell on the air-shaft; and after having supper with the family from whom he rented his room, he had sat for an hour on the side of his bed, with one shoe in his hand and the other on his foot. He had walked the two miles to the door of the flat-house in which she lived, and every step had hung trembling in the balance of his irresolution; but when he turned into her doorway, he pressed the button of the Kline bell and passed up the stairs without a pause; and when a door opened in the darkness of the hallway, he asked: "Is Miss Kline in?" in the voice of a challenge.

The breath went out of him when she said: "What d' you want?"

"It 's — " He cleared his throat. "It 's me — Gleason."

She repeated defiantly, "What d' you want?"

"Nothing," he apologized. "I thought — I don't know. I wanted — I thought p'raps you 'd come out — somewheres."

She stood black in the doorway against a faint light that came into the room, through the front windows, from the street lamps. She did not move. At last she said, "Come in here!"

He stumbled across the threshold. She shut the door behind him. She asked thickly: "When you brought him home this morning — did he talk?"

"Ye-es."

"What did he say?"

Gleason looked down at the darkness where his feet were. He did not answer.

"Did he tell you we took in washing?"

"I — I don't remember."

"Did he?"

"Yes."

"Did he tell you she makes him wash the clothes?"

"I guess so. . . . Yes."

"Did he tell you she gives him ten cents on ev'ry dollar he makes — and he hides them away — and goes off like that when he gets enough? . . . Did he?"

"I could n't help it. I could n't stop him. I had to jolly him to get him to come."

"And we 're the laughing-stock of the whole street? And they call him names. And the boys throw things at him? Did he?"

"I don't care what he told me," Gleason answered shakily. "I don't see what diff'rence it makes to us — except it ain't nice for you. It ain't your fault any. . . . What 's the matter?"

She walked across the room in the dim light, and stood looking out the open

window, with her forehead against the glass of the raised sash. "What d' you want?" she said in a strangled voice.

Gleason took a step towards her, blundered against the center table, and stopped. "I don't want anything. . . . I thought p'raps you 'd like to come out somewheres." He felt in his pocket. "I 've got the rest of the peanuts, and —" She began to laugh hysterically. He wiped his forehead with the back of his hand. "What 's the matter?" he faltered.

"N-nothin'," she sobbed. "I 'll g-go."

At ten o'clock, they were still sitting on their bench beside the Bridle Path, in the shadow of the bushes. Her own small handkerchief was a damp ball in her lap, and she was wiping her eyes with a big one which she had borrowed from him. She had told him all her troubles; he was consoling her clumsily. "That 's all right now. You want to get away from there. They 'll get along just as well without you. You want to get away. You can't work all day and come home to be worried like that."

"D' you think I 'm like *her?*" she asked suddenly. "*He* says I am — when I won't give him money."

Gleason had had only a glimpse of her mother — a big, red-haired woman with the face of a prize-fighter. "Don't you mind what *he* says," he defended the girl.

"But I *am*," she cried guiltily. "I know I am. I'm just as bossy and bad-tempered and — and *mean!*"

"So 'd anybody be with *him*."

"It ain't with him," she said. "It 's with ev'rybody." She added faintly: "It 's with *you*."

"Aw, say!" He choked up with the same bewildering emotion that had seized him in the restaurant, over the ice-cream. She reached out a hand to him; he clung to it.

"Ain't I?" she whispered in the darkness.

He shook his head. "You — you 're —"

She crushed his fingers. "If I ever am," she said fiercely, "bat the brains out o' me, will you?"

At midnight, the loungers standing under the resplendent sheet-iron awning of the corner saloon, saw him coming unsteadily up the street, his hands in his pockets, his hat over his eyes. He swerved away from the light, and passed by on the edge of the gutter. They nudged each other. "There 's Frosty Mame's steady." They stared after him. "What 's the matter with him?"

He was blinded by a blur of tears. His lips were trembling with the tingle of his first kiss. The flag-stones of the sidewalk flowed in a heaving stream under his feet. And the heated air of the street was her breath whispering against his cheek.

FINANCES OF THE SHARK SYSTEM

"COL. LUMPKIN" DESCRIBES SOME OF THE PERQUISITES OF A CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY

BY

JOHN McAULEY PALMER

AUTHOR OF "COLONEL LUMPKIN'S CAMPAIGN," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH CARTOONS BY JOHN T. McCUTCHEON

AFTER dinner Colonel Lumpkin led the way to his library where we had our coffee and cigars. We had been talking about Westport politics, and finally we drifted from local matters to the railroad question.

"By the way, Colonel," asked Judge Docket, "what is the amount of your investment in Winnebago Pacific?"

"Not a cent," replied Colonel Lumpkin.

"Not a cent?" exclaimed Barlow in surprise. "Why, I had always understood that next to Senator Shark, you were the heaviest shareholder in the property."

"And so I am." said Colonel Lumpkin. "But I understood the Judge to ask me how much I *invested*. It is true that I own something like twelve millions in "Shark" securities, but, as I said before, I have never invested a cent in the property."

Barlow gasped and looked at the Colonel in speechless amazement. The Colonel carefully lit his cigar and settled back comfortably in his arm-chair. "Oh, I see," said Barlow at length. "You must have inherited your railroad securities."

"No," said Colonel Lumpkin. "My inheritance was limited to a good appetite and a determination not to go hungry."

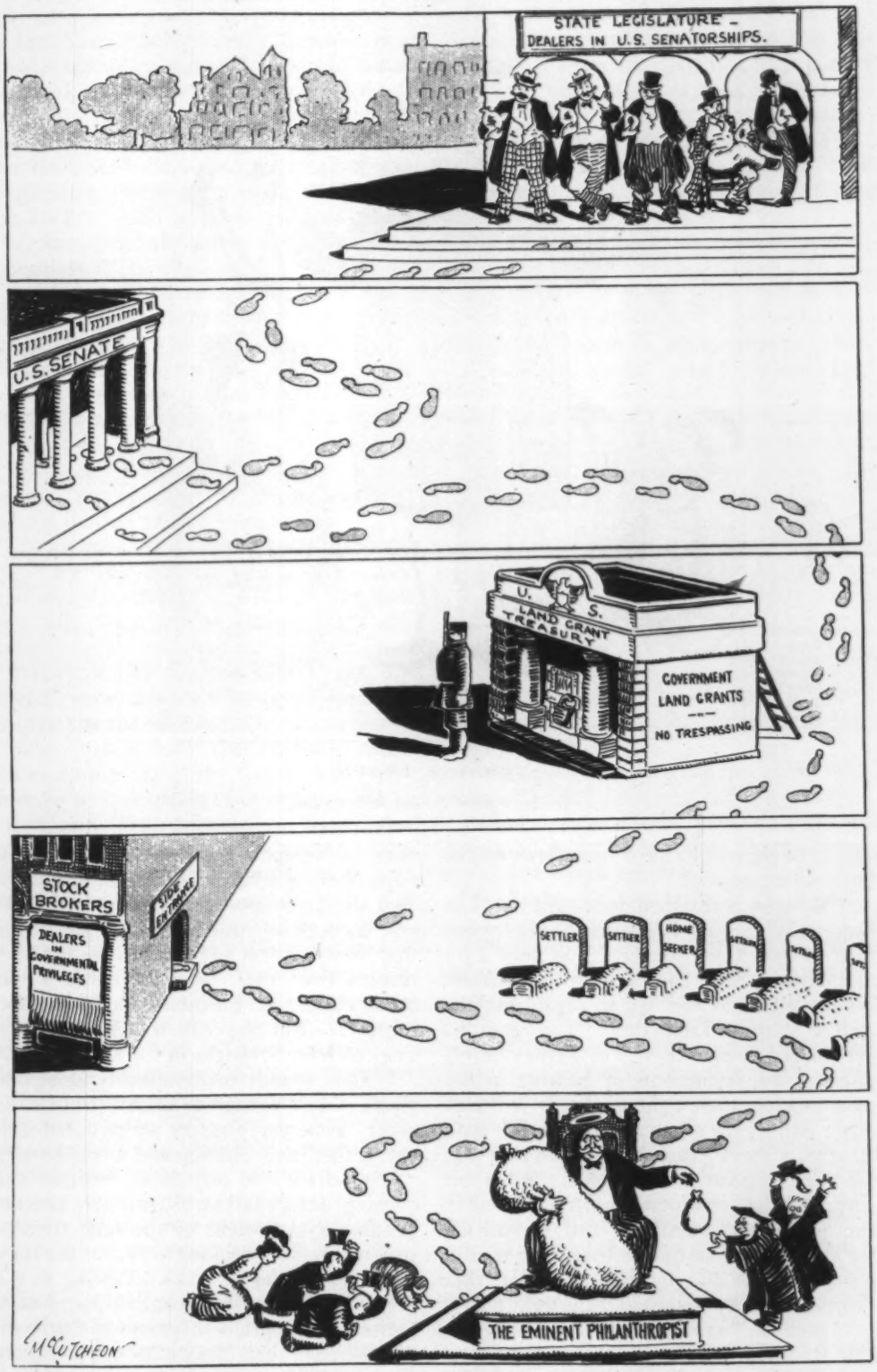
This paradox was too much for Barlow. He shook his head and lapsed into silence.

"But how did you get in, Colonel?" I asked in order to save the conversation. "You must have given something in exchange for a hundred thousand shares of gilt-edge stock."

"And so I did," said Colonel Lumpkin with a chuckle. "I gave my services as a captain of industry." Barlow's face brightened up and he gave a sigh of relief.

"I got into Winnebago Pacific the year of the great senatorial dead-lock," continued Colonel Lumpkin. "I went down to the legislature that winter to hold up the state government end of my gas and street-car interests. The Honorable Leonidas Shark was there too. He had come down from Washington to help reëlect himself to the Senate. The Senator's tally showed that he would be about five short on joint ballot, and he was, therefore, on a still-hunt for negotiable statesmen. Now it happened that I had three street-car senators and five gas-company assemblymen in my hip pocket, and, naturally, it was n't very long before the Honorable Leonidas and I had opened up diplomatic relations. We held our first conference at the Senator's hotel, the night before the opening of the session. I was still a young man in those days, while the Senator was in his prime as a great financier and statesman. He was a little disposed to underestimate me at first. He began to talk on the money question. The Senator was one of the greatest authorities on the currency in Congress, and in order to prove his grasp of the problem, he offered to determine experimentally how many one-hundred-dollar bills my coat pocket would hold. I resented such a crude estimate of my political importance, and indignantly reminded the Senator that I was a business man.

"'Oh, I see!' exclaimed Senator Shark as he squeezed his experimental wad back into his own pocket. 'In that event your price is probably higher. But, as I am a business man myself, Colonel Lumpkin, I



THE TRIUMPHAL TRAIL OF SENATOR SHARK

SENATOR SHARK

The great public-spirited philanthropist

should be pleased to have your views on the business situation.'

"'My view is this, Senator,' said I. 'The State of Winnebago is getting too big for one man to own it any longer. You need a junior partner, and I happen to be the man you need. What do you say to organizing the firm of Shark & Lumpkin?' The Senator's eyes blazed for an instant, but, as they did n't discover any symptoms of melting in my countenance, their light gradually softened down into a glow of amusement. 'Sir,' said he after a short pause, 'I perceive that you are either a great man or a fool. I am not surprised that you found so little interest in the greenback question. But, admitting for the sake of argument that I do need a partner, how do you figure it out that Colonel Timothy Lumpkin is the right man?'

"'Because,' said I, 'the Winnebago Pacific Railroad is no longer the only political feed-trough in the state. A number of your old followers are beginning to find nourishment in Westport franchises. You are five votes short of a bare majority now, Senator. You are fifteen short of a safe control, and if you 'll check up your lost sheep you 'll find that most of them have learned to get their turnips from me. Now I think it 's good politics and good business to keep the flock together. But the only way to do it is to keep both feed-troughs in the same corral.'

"'That sounds reasonable,' said Senator Shark. 'It 's enough to dream over for one night. And now, suppose we go down-stairs and get a prairie-chicken and a cold bottle.'

"We did n't do any more business that evening, except to sign a temporary protocol pending a settlement of the final terms of the treaty. We decided to permit the Legislature to convene on the following day as prescribed in the state constitution, but we limited its program to games of 'drop the handkerchief' and other innocent diversions. On joint-ballot I voted my men for General Canister, and up to the seventeenth ballot

the dead-lock was complete. But on the eighteenth ballot, to everybody's surprise, my men stampeded. General Canister, in a brilliant speech, withdrew in favor of Senator Shark. And that great statesman triumphantly entered upon his fourth term in the Senate of the United States. Shortly after the dead-lock, I traded a block of gas and traction shares for a block of 'Winnebago Pacific,' and I was even prevailed upon to become one of the directors of that great corporation."

"But, Colonel Lumpkin," exclaimed Barlow, "when you bought those shares was n't that an investment in Winnebago Pacific?"

"Not at all," said the Colonel. "The Senator and I were both playing on 'velvet.' I swapped some of my velvet for some of his. That was all."

"Do you mean to say," asked Judge Docket, "that you got all of your railroad holdings in that trade?"

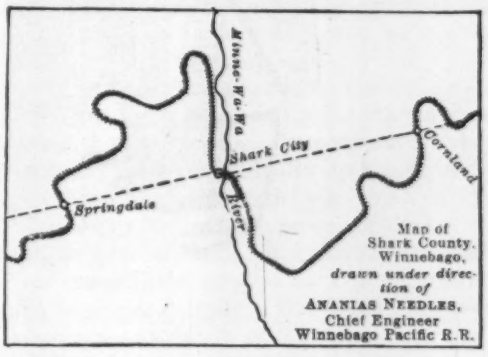
"By no means," answered Colonel Lumpkin. "My first interest was a very small one — not over a half a million. The rest came later from my perquisites as a director."

"But how did Senator Shark get *his* velvet?" asked Barlow who was still seeking a clue to the paradox.

"Why, Shark built the railroad," said Colonel Lumpkin. "He was a statesman before he was a captain of industry. When he first came into prominence, Winnebago was a great undeveloped country. The people wanted better communication, and they did n't know how to get it. But the Honorable Leonidas did know how to get it. He was a man of ideas. He translated a vague public demand into a concrete idea. He canvassed the state in favor of a great east-and-west railroad that was to connect Westport with both oceans. The people of Winnebago believed in him, and they therefore sent him to the United States Senate as their agent and trustee. The new senator's first care was to secure a liberal land-grant as an aid to the new enterprise, and then he proceeded to organize the corporation that was to profit by the land-grant. Fortified by the land-grant the Senator found little difficulty in financing the scheme. The Shark Syndicate sold $30,000,000 of bonds, and built the line with their proceeds. They also issued $35,000,000 of stock which they put in their pockets, together with the title to 10,000,000 acres of the best land in the State of Winnebago. The people of the state were so charmed with Mr. Shark's courtesy in accepting the ownership of the best part of the state that they kept him in the Senate until the growth of his business interests made it necessary for him to assign the office to his private secretary."

"And yet some people complain that republics are ungrateful," exclaimed Judge Docket.

"Speaking of the construction of the Winnebago Pacific," continued Colonel Lumpkin as he rose from his chair and walked toward his book-shelves, "I have something here that may interest you gentlemen. Here is a map of Shark County, Winnebago,



showing a part of the original line of the Winnebago Pacific."

"What a crooked track," exclaimed Judge Docket. "I had no idea that Shark County was such a rough country."

"And why do you think it is rough?" asked the Colonel.

"Those curves tell the story," answered Judge Docket. "When I was a boy I used to work on a railroad survey in Pennsylvania, and I know from experience that a crooked track stands for engineering difficulties. It means a winding path along mountain contours."

Colonel Lumpkin smiled. "It may mean that in Pennsylvania, Judge, but not in Winnebago. Why, Shark County is as level as this floor, and almost as smooth. It 's in the very heart of the corn belt. When the railroad entered the country you could run a furrow from one end of the county to the other without taking your plough out of the ground. You had better guess again."

"Then the chief engineer of the railroad must have been drunk or crazy when he ran his line through Shark County."

A neat trick to flim-flam small shareholders

"Not at all," said Colonel Lumpkin. "He was as cool as a cucumber. It was simply business. The Shark System had a land-grant of 20,000 acres per mile in that part of Winnebago, and so, where the land was good, they made as many miles as possible. Over in the hills of Alkali County, where the land was poor, the railroad was built as straight as a crow flies."

"And do you mean to say," asked Judge Docket, "That the Winnebago Pacific still operates all that useless mileage?"

"By no means," said Colonel Lumpkin. "As soon as the land was sold to settlers the line was re-located. The dotted line on the map shows the present path of the Shark System."

"But why were not these operations exposed and investigated?" I asked.

"They were exposed," said Colonel Lumpkin. "But that was before exposures had become a popular form of literature. The people accepted gift horses in those days without examining their teeth. The matter did come up in Congress, but it caromed against the Senator from Winnebago and kissed off. Senator Ferret asked unanimous consent to investigate certain alleged irregularities in connection with land-grants. Senator Shark immediately rose to his feet and exclaimed: 'Mr. President.' 'The Senator from Winnebago,' said the presiding officer. 'Mr. President,' exclaimed Senator Shark, 'I object.' I give this speech in full," continued Colonel Lumpkin "because it is Senator Shark's longest forensic effort. Later, on the personal appeal of his colleague, Senator Shark consented to have the matter referred to the Committee on Senatorial Courtesy, and there the incident closed."

"But how can you account for the Senator's remarkable popularity with the people?" I asked.

"Because he was a good fellow," exclaimed Colonel Lumpkin, "the best I ever knew. He was the soul of generosity. Many a struggling young statesman in those days was grateful to Senator Shark for his first taste of champagne and terrapin. And then, too, about the time of the land-grant incident, his bounty slopped over beyond

the limits of his immediate following, and he won the love and gratitude of the whole state. As you know, he laid out $3,000,000 (about one-twentieth of his embezzlements from the public) in the foundation of Shark University, where young gentlemen learn to be public-spirited after the example of their distinguished founder. And the people are still grateful to Senator Shark. Ever since his death they have shown their reverence for his memory by dividing their senatorial franchise with the Winnebago Pacific. The people of Winnebago sometimes have a United States Senator, and sometimes they have not; but the Winnebago Pacific always has at least one, with quite frequently an attorney-special (by courtesy called attorney-general), and too many assemblymen, aldermen, and railroad commissioners to enumerate."

Here Colonel Lumpkin paused and reached for a fresh cigar. But Barlow was not yet satisfied. "Pardon me, Colonel," said he, "but I don't see yet how you got your Shark holdings."

The Colonel smiled. "Barlow," said he, "I hoped you fellows were going to let me off on that."

"I sustain the objection," said Judge Docket. "The witness is not bound to incriminate himself."

"But perhaps I 'd just as well own up," said Colonel Lumpkin. "It 's the only chance I have to 'scoop' Steffens. He 'll drop into Westport one of these days, and if I don't expose Tim Lumpkin, he will. So here goes, Barlow. Now, when I entered the directory of Winnebago Pacific the property was in a bad way. We were charging all that the traffic would bear, and our revenues were altogether too big. We were paying the interest on our bonds, and we were trying our best to hide ominously big dividends on our velvet. Profits were still increasing rapidly, and anybody with a grain of sense could see that, if we did n't look out, there would soon be a logical demand for lower rates — and, of course, that would disturb the prosperity of the whole country. As soon as Congress adjourned, Senator Shark came on from Washington and we had a conference on the matter. With my franchise experience in Westport, it seemed a very simple problem to me. I proposed the good old plan of issuing enough new stock to cut the apparent profit down one-half. But right there I learned a new lesson in high finance.

"'That is too crude,'" said Senator Shark. "'Oh, I don't mean straight out-and-out stock watering,' I protested. 'Our lawyers can rig up a securities company, or some other up-to-date quibble for it.'"

"'But that is n't the difficulty,'" said Senator Shark. 'A new stock issue is all right so far as buncoing the public about rates is concerned. But the objection to a new issue lies in the fact that it compels you to divide the loot with the other shareholders. If we double our shares, we will have to double everybody else's shares. Now, I think that six per cent is enough for investors. They don't really expect any more, and they ought n't to have any more. It is n't good business, and besides we ought n't to encourage the people to become extravagant. I 'm figuring on some way of keeping the shares on a six per cent basis, no matter what the property earns.'

"I could n't quite catch the Senator's drift, but I kept still and waited for a clue. 'Now, I was thinking,' he continued, 'that we might meet the difficulty by leasing some new branches. What do you think of the Winnebago Midland property, Colonel?'

"'It does n't amount to much,' I said. 'Its competition annoys us a little, especially in the coal trade. But I can't see that leasing it would help us much.'"

"'What does it earn?'" he asked.

"'Not more than a half a million a year above interest charges,'" I ventured.

"'That 's right,' continued Senator Shark. 'Now, as our freight schedules are netting about a million a year more than a reasonable profit, why can't we adjust things by taking over the Midland at an annual rental of a million and a half?' I looked at Senator Shark, and for the first time it crossed my mind that he was getting old.

"'What?' I cried. 'You would deliberately rent property for three times as much as it is worth?' The Senator smiled at me almost pityingly. 'Don't you see the point?' he asked. 'Is n't it good business?'"

"'I can't see it,'" I said.

"'But Colonel,' he urged, 'I am assuming that the firm of Shark & Lumpkin is to buy up the Midland before we propose the lease. That extra million a year would then go into our pockets. It would disappear as Winnebago Pacific earnings. And incidentally our little investment in Midland would net us twenty millions clear.'"

After pausing a moment to give us time to reflect on this stroke of genius, Colonel

Lumpkin resumed: "Well, the Senator and I bought the Midland and leased it to the Winnebago Pacific. Two years later the Winnebago Pacific was again earning too much, and then we leased it the Minne-wawa Valley Line. A little later we handed over the Lobbyport and Stockwater. Indeed, for a number of years I made a specialty of buying bankrupt railroads to feed to the Winnebago Pacific. And then — well, I swore off.

"I decided it was about time for me to get off the water wagon. I felt that I had earned enough, even for my services as a captain of industry."

"Does the Shark System still follow this benevolent policy?" asked Judge Docket.

"I don't know," said Colonel Lumpkin. "I am not in the confidence of the management at present. Methods change from time to time, but, of course, their general aim is always the same, to make excessive earnings appear reasonable"

"But such things must be exceptional," urged Barlow. "I cannot believe that your account of the history of the Winnebago Pacific is typical of our railroad finance."

"Mr. Barlow," exclaimed Colonel Lumpkin, "I don't know an important railroad in the United States whose published accounts give a truthful statement of the ratio of earnings to investment. You must n't take such things literally. Railway statistics are intended to be taken in a Pickwickian sense. They are to be regarded as imaginative literature, and if you will look up there in that bookcase you will find my edition of 'Poor's Manual' on the same shelf with the 'Arabian Nights,' and the adventures of 'Baron Munchausen.'"

THE PROPERTY-MAN

BY

BOOTH TARKINGTON

AUTHOR OF "MONSIEUR BEAUCAIRE" "THE BEAUTIFUL LADY," ETC.

IT was the second day out; the "Koordam" had settled into the steady, rather cheerful little pitch which is her gait, and her passengers were beginning to recognize one another, to exchange a word here and there, even to pick up strangers for shuffle-board. She was not a big boat, as bigness goes on the sea nowadays, and she belongs to a pleasantly unfashionable line, untempting to every species of shark, so that the ship's company nearly always becomes a merry one.

Thus it was that when the handsome, rather Jewish-looking young man, whom we had remarked strolling the decks alone, came into the smoking-room where five or six of us were making — that is, taking — certain preparations for dinner, late on that second afternoon, we asked him to join us; and he did, to our pleasure, as it proved.

The talk ran along in a desultory way, and I do not know how it came to be proposed that we should meet in the smoking-room for our coffee, after dinner, and that one of the company, to be selected by lot, should relate at length, for the entertainment of the others, whatever experience he considered the most extraordinary of his life: that is, spin a yarn "founded on fact." In order that the story-teller might have time to put his thoughts in order, it was suggested that straws from the steward's whisk-broom should immediately be drawn, and the suggestion was forthwith put into action. The short straw fell to the newcomer, and he accepted the decision with a resignation which led us to believe he had something to tell.

Behold us, then, after dinner, plaid-capped voyagers, puffing at pipe and cigarette about the rosy electric fire in the smoking-room, tables at hand supporting coffee and all the needs of life, the sea running easily without; now and then a sound of music from forward, or the cry of a scampering child evading its bedward nurse on the deck; and we — ready to believe anything our new friend should choose to tell us!

"It seems probable," he began smilingly, "that you have remarked that I am an actor."

There were two of our party who prided themselves upon their tact. One of these said, "Yes, indeed!" and the other immediately exclaimed: "Certainly not!" The young man was disconcerted by neither, but, still smiling, went on with his allotted task. . . .

We are easily known. The life we lead is not like that of other men; and the use of our bodies as the tools of our trade, leaves a mark upon us. I need n't tell you that, all in all, it is not an easy life, and I think you will agree with me that the faces of almost all actors, when divested of the expression of the moment, are essentially melancholy. No wonder! There are certain hardships which none of us escape, cruelties which the followers of other professions do not suffer: we are pilloried for the mob and the critics every day; we spend half our lives in the stocks; and the conditions under which our work is performed make us, more than others, the toys of jealousy. But it is from a memory of one of the physical hardships that we must endure that I have evoked the episode which I think the strangest of my experience, and which I hope you may find worth hearing, tonight.

I wonder if many people outside the profession know anything of what we have to grow used to during a season of what are called "One-Night-Stands": the constant hurrying for trains, on which we spend half the time, while their rumble and jar never get out of us, the vile hotels, the unspeakable beds, the varied food, the shifts of weather and even climate, the blurred panorama of cities that swims dizzily before our eyes; so that many and many a time I have been too dazed and listless to know the name of the town I was in: the racked nerves the worn tempers of the company whose exasperation one must needs forgive — the jar and unhealthiness and worry and wretchedness of it all! And yet, sensitive and thin-nerved as one may be, he must work, work, work at his delicate and trying art till he drops. No wonder our minds break sometimes and wear away the last years in asylums. People cry out against the dissipation, the immorality of our profession. Under the conditions, I think it is the most moral, the most sober of them all!

A number of years ago, Ernest Mallory, who had been for two years leading man with his wife, Gertrude Lemist, conceived the idea that the Lemist-Mallory combination could play their Shaksperian repertoire for three months of one-night-stands in the South and Northwest, to finish with a long engagement in San Francisco. I was under contract to Mallory at the time, and he took me out with the company as a lead, playing next to himself. I did *Mercutio*, *Jaques*, *Malvolio*, *Gratiano*, and the *Ghost*, while Mallory starred himself with his wife.

He was as sharp a disciplinarian as I ever worked under, an exceedingly thin-tempered man, irascible, and yet able to control himself, sometimes, when you least expected it; but his wife was always a dear woman, as gentle as she was beautiful, as kind to us as she was patient with Mallory. The latter, I think, suffered more than any of us (except the property-man) and he was strung up to the breaking point by the care and responsibility of the venture, for he had risked a great deal on making it go. I do not believe he slept more than four hours in the twenty-four.

We carried a great many handsome properties that year. Mallory, a great detailist and a dabbler in archaeological knick-knacks, made a specialty of them; they were under the care of a young man who called himself "Cyril Bernard." You see by that terrific name that he expected from the first to wear a buskin some day! He had a great many other harassing duties beside the care of Italian rapiers and papiér-maché salt-cellars after old Benvenuto.

Cyril Bernard was a silent, thin, lank-haired fellow who could not have been called "cheerful-looking" even at the start, but by the end of the first month he had grown so haggard, so dark about the eyes and so white about the mouth that I did not like to look at him — I had trouble enough without that! And yet I did look at him often. He had the fascination of a skull.

Mallory picked him out for his whipping-boy; he always had to have one particular butt for his satire and his wrath, a sort of outlet for his nerves, and this trip he chose Cyril Bernard. Everything that went wrong was Bernard's fault. Mallory seemed really to find a distinct relief in heaping it up on him. Time and again I heard him take orders that meant that he could have no sleep for perhaps thirty-six hours, or something equally destructive, with his eyes on the

ground and his hands working nervously behind him. He spoke very rarely; indeed, he was as taciturn as Grimaud himself!

Early in the second month I discovered that though his voice was still his lips seldom were. Almost always, when I looked at him, he seemed to be talking noiselessly, a habit he had formed on the road, I was sure, for he had not had it when we started; but he gradually became, to my observation, an unceasing, restless whisperer to himself — a silent man, never for an instant silent.

He had the misfortune to fall in love with Gertrude Lemist. I saw it one Sunday when we were rehearsing "The Merchant of Venice." (Mallory called rehearsals whenever we had an afternoon off the train — for fear of spoiling us, I suppose.) I was standing up the stage and watching the property-man (as I said, he fascinated me) who was looking on from the side while Mallory directed the last act. Mrs. Mallory was a very good Portia, and when it came to the return of the ring (which she did so prettily that you wanted then and there to run away with her) for the first time since I had known him, I saw Cyril Bernard smile. It was this smile that betrayed him to me. In all my life I never had seen a thing so wildly sweet, so wan, so wistful, so hopelessly, cheerlessly tender as that smile upon the emaciated face of the property-man as he watched Gertrude Lemist making love to her stage lover.

Mallory's deep voice sounded in a rather sharp bit of coaching; he laid his hand on his wife's shoulder to turn her about, and at the action Bernard's smile vanished — perhaps it is straining the figure, but I don't know how better to express it than to say it vanished violently; and at once another creature looked out of the property-man's eyes as a man looks out of a window. It was like seeing a laughing child, pressing its face against the pane, instantaneously replaced by one of those savage Japanese wa.-masks.

An hour later I saw him stand and take a bitter tongue-lashing from Mallory, his eyes humbly on the floor, and then go quietly about his work with the patient stoop of the drudge that he was. I watched him furtively, after this, whenever I had the chance; he haunted me eerily, and I believe I used to dream about him, dreams not pleasant. His noiseless lips were ever at it, and his hands, nearly always behind his back, when he was not busy, moved incessantly against each other, the thin fingers intertwining.

The season, so far, had not been financially successful, which increased Mallory's irritableness so that toward the last he was often quite unbearable, and, worn out himself, had little patience for the weariness of others, none for their blunders. There was a young man — Tomkins, from Georgia, in the company, a gentle-mannered, earnest worker whose pronounced Southern way of speaking was delightful to my ears, especially when some scene gave it contrast to the fine, able brogue of a young Irishman who was with us. Tomkins had a terrible habit of forgetting his lines — "going up" — but he nearly always got back into shape after a cough or an "ah" or two, or somebody would cut in without a cue and save the scene. After this happened Tomkins would keep out of Mallory's way for several days.

One Saturday night, a week before we were to open in San Francisco, we were playing in a fair-sized town in Oregon and two things happened. I dressed for *Mercutio* rather late and ran down to get my sword from Bernard in a great hurry. These swords were beautiful Italian rapiers, the pride of Mallory's heart, and were laid out in a big leather case under Bernard's eye. I seized the first to my hand and started for the wings, buckling my belt round my waist as I went, when the property-man called to me in a harsh voice.

"Don't take that sword," he cried. "That is n't yours. Take the one you always do."

"It makes no difference," I replied. "This one will do." And I kept on toward the wings.

"I say it won't!" he said fiercely. "Take your own. We don't use the one you 've got."

"Nonsense," I answered. "I have n't time to change; the sword's all right." I caught my cue at that and went on.

In the scene of the fight between *Mercutio* and *Tybalt* it was my custom to draw at the words "*Alla stacatta*," and to whip my sword lightly through the fingers of my hand as if to test the steel. Knowing how dull the blades were kept, I suppose I had grown into the habit of doing this carelessly and not at all as a real duelist with a sharp sword in his hand would do it, for to-night, when my fingers left the blade, I found them covered with blood. The rapier had been sharpened.

I had no time to think. I had at once to begin the fight with Tomkins who was doing *Tybalt*, and I fenced very carefully, keeping as far away from him as possible, but I was

so nervous that I touched him once, and, though the touch was very light, his doublet seemed to separate of itself; a long gap appeared in the side of it, showing Tomkins' shirt underneath. I fell into the arms of *Benvolio* and *Tybalt* fled. A moment later I was standing back in the wings, tying up my hand and looking across to the other side where poor Tomkins, instead of watching the scene for his cue to go on, was working over the cut in his doublet with an expression of grevious amazement. He had taken it off and was trying to repair it with pins.

When he heard, "*Here comes furious Tybalt!*" and remembered the wrath he would have to face for a late entrance, he began to struggle to get back into the doublet; it caught somewhere and denied him; half a dozen members of the company ran to help him; the garment proved obdurate; the pins would not hold, the tear widened and ran down a seam, becoming an immense rip; his sword-belt got unfastened, and finally, his hat over his ears, his wig askew, tripping over his sword, his legs trembling, and his face purple, he stumbled out upon the stage and miserably faced the seething *Romeo*. At this point *Tybalt's* only line before he is killed is: "*Thou wretched boy that didst consort him here, Shalt with him hence,*" in reply to *Romeo's* declaration that either *Tybalt* or he, himself, must bear the dead *Mercutio* company.

"*Speak, you fool!*" raged *Romeo* under his breath. The prompter was trying to give *Tybalt* his line; but he was too stunned to catch it, and then some devil tempted him to extemporize.

"No, suh!" he said. "Ah reckon we 'll see about that, who 'll keep company with *Mercutio!* You bettuh look out! Mebbe you 'll git into trouble yo' self, suh!"

'T was the Georgian's substitute for Shakspere.

It was a good thing that the fight between *Romeo* and *Tybalt* is placed just here in the play, for there would have been one anyway. It is also well enough that *Tybalt* is made to fall beneath the sword of his antagonist, for that would have happened, too. Mallory had us all called, after the play, and swore that Tomkins should never play *Tybalt* again in his company. "We 've got to keep you," he stormed, "but hereafter, in this play, you 're cast for the *Prince's Gentleman!* Perhaps your Cyclopean intellect will be equal to that! Your ambition is to do leading parts I believe. You will! In course of time, by dilligent study, you may hope to be playing leading citizens; you may even be leading a file of Roman soldiers! But I advise you to turn your attention to literature. Shakspere is n't good enough for you, and you have begun to give the world something better. That 's the spirit I like to see. Edit him to suit yourself!"

Then he dismissed us.

Cyril Bernard touched me on the sleeve as I turned away from the lecture. "It was your fault," he said, pointing to my left hand, which I had bound up temporarily in my handkerchief. "I told you not to take that sword."

"Why did you sharpen it?" I asked.

"For protection," he answered. "I 'm responsible for some valuable things, and I have to look out for them, don't I?"

"All right," I said. "I 'll take the one you tell me after this."

And I thought little more of it.

"What are you going to do for a *Tybalt?*" I asked Mallory the next day, as I sat after dinner with him in his room at the hotel.

"Heaven only knows," he replied gloomily. "There 's nobody we can change about. But I swear that lunatic, Tomkins, shall never play it again! Never!"

There was a knock at the door, and on Mallory's "Come in," Cyril Bernard opened it and entered, pale, emaciated, humble. At the sight of him I involuntarily glanced at my bandaged left hand, and when I looked up I found that his own eyes had followed mine, and were fixed upon the injured fingers, which was natural enough. I supposed that he wondered if I had told Mallory the cause of the accident — I had not, of course, for in the latter's uncertain state of temper I feared it might have got poor "props" into trouble.

"Well?" said Mallory sharply.

"You want some one for *Tybalt,*" said the property-man. "I 've come to see if you 'd let me do it."

Mallory threw himself back in his chair and laughed dementedly.

"I suppose you know the lines?" I asked.

"I know every part in the repertoire of the company," answered Bernard quietly. "Perhaps you might try me."

"You doddering idiot!" said Mallory. "You *might* do for the apothecary, like Smike!"

"Suppose you let him do a bit of it for us" I ventured to interrupt.

"Which scene?" asked Bernard.

"Go ahead!" laughed Mallory. "I 'd like to hear it."

Bernard needed no second bidding. He stepped across to the opposite side of the room, threw back his lean shoulders and began. Very few times in my life have I been more suddenly or more pleasantly surprised, and I do not think Mallory ever was. He let Bernard run about half through the part before he stopped him.

"That will do," he said. "Can you fence?"

"Yes," answered the property-man, "I can."

"Very well," said Mallory. "Tomkins will show you the fights, and I 'll give you one rehearsal. You play *Tybalt* in San Francisco next week. We don't do the piece again until then."

It was a cheering day for all of us when we reached San Francisco — a new lease of life — to be done for a while with the racking, sleepless, soul-destroying one-nights; to be quit of trains for a little; to rest a space from the eternal packing and unpacking. We got in on Monday afternoon in time for a rehearsal, the only one the new *Tybalt* was to have, and every one was profoundly astonished at the intelligence with which the property-man read his lines — poor, sweet-natured Tomkins congratulating him with beautiful goodwill.

It was "S. R. O.," that night, chairs in the orchestra and the music under the stage, for Gertrude Lemist was, and is, and deserves to be, one of the great pets of the Golden Gate. It was a pleasant thing to look out at a house *full* of people once more, nice-looking people responsive to our work, instead of the bleak expanses and thin sprinkling in front, with no gallery at all, that we 'd been used to. It did seem like getting back to God's country again, especially with the certainty that you could eat a good supper afterward.

The atmosphere was warm with success; everything we did carried over the footlights, and the fact that it held the audience and was found good came back over the "foots" to us, made known to us by the sixth sense, that psychic perception which is developed in any actor who is even a bit of an actor. Such a night pays for long toil and discouragement; you can seldom safely predict it beforehand, but when it comes you find it has been worth waiting for. When that electric affinity is established with the audience, there is a great uplift on the working side of the footlights. The big effects that have been striven for in the dismal hustle of rehearsals come — of themselves, apparently — the actors work together, yet work well within their strength, and even critics (while the performance lasts) are taken off their guard.

Gertrude Lemist was never a more pathetically winsome *Juliet*, and Mallory steadied down to his work like the heady captain that he was; *Romeo* was always his best part and I never saw him do it better. I think I may say, without vanity we were all good; but it was the *Tybalt* who was the surprise of that evening — and more than a surprise; indeed, if I said "the sensation" it would be nearer the truth. There was no doubt that he was a sensation to us of the company!

When he made his first entrance I did n't believe it could be Cyril Bernard, and for several minutes I was sure that Mallory had found some one at the last moment to put on instead. It was a princely, medieval Italian nobleman who stood before us, warrior-like, hot-blooded, and intolerant. There was n't a trace of the hollow-chested, hollowed-eyed property-man in this splendid personage. Past-master in the art of make-up as he was, no wonder even I found difficulty in believing that it was Bernard. He added to this wonderful make-up a thing which is very hard to explain, a certain faith, a strange sort of hypnotism or spell — which made *Tybalt* absolutely convincing. As I say, it is a hard thing to put into words, but there is undoubtedly a magic (not quite the same as what we call "magnetism") which some players have at times and others never have. I do not believe that any actor has it always ready at command for every performance of his life — it flits away and leaves him sometimes in the very hour of need. It is like a heavenly visitor, and those upon whom the strange creature calls are set apart. To have it or not to have it, often is all the difference between being a great actor and being a good actor. Perhaps one might call it genius, though it is n't what we commonly mean by that word; it is something different; and, even more than what we are used to call genius, it is prone to kinship with what we call insanity. Our property-man had it.

The audience was abnormally conscious of him every moment he was on the stage. Of

course the grouping, the arrangement of scenes, the "tempo," "the feeding," threw everything to our stars; Bernard did not interfere with any of this in the least; on the contrary, he strengthened all of it, but the small and thankless part he played stood out in full relief against the others. I'll never forget the timbre of his voice: the perfect *Tybaltness* of it. It was like a heart taking fire and throwing out words for sparks.

He was anything but the noisy *Tybalt* you often see; but he frightened you with a quarrelsomeness that seemed less in mood than in his blood; all the more "furious *Tybalt*" for that! And yet you could n't help feeling keen sympathy for that ugly character — not that he played it against the traditions of the play, which indicate, of course, that all the sympathy is to be thrown to *Romeo*. But he made you understand *Tybalt*, as, long ago, a great actor began to make us understand *Shylock*. When *Capulet* rebuked *Tybalt* at the masque, and he left in anger, you felt the outrageous injustice of the rebuke, understood the sore turbulence in the heart of the loyal duelist, and felt that here was enough to turn such a soul to war indeed!

But it was in the scene of his fight with *Romeo* that he lifted the house and frightened me! I stood in the wings to watch it, and his entrance for that scene was so full of ominous meaning that I could have clapped my hands with admiration if a glance at his eyes had n't, to my own surprise, made me shiver. He stalked on with a baleful intentness to kill, which I never before saw so plainly expressed by any actor. How he did express it I can't analyze — not to this day. And I had never seen a stage-fight, or any other fight, like that one. You know how tame stage-fights usually are, how cut-and-dried. This one actually made you forget the foregone conclusion. And Mallory, perforce, lived up to it — he seemed actually to be fighting for his life. *Tybalt* fought only to kill, and I must say the man's manner and look were glorious.

I thought Mallory purposely held the fight longer than usual, as long as he could, feeling the real thrill and excitement of the audience and wishing to lift them to the limit, which he certainly did; for when *Tybalt* crashed down at last there were people on their feet all over the house, and then came one of those roars that we work our lives out for and sometimes never hear. I turned away to go to my dressing-room and found that I was trembling, a thing commoner than you'd imagine behind the scenes.

I placed my sword in the leather case (temporarily in charge of the assistant for the scene was not finished and the body of *Tybalt* was still upon the stage) and, as I did so, an odd and unpleasant impulse came to me, quite without reason. There were only two swords left in the case and I drew each from its sheath. I can't explain why it was that a feeling of great relief came over me to find that the sharpened blade was one of them.

Next morning I walked over to the theater with Mallory (we were staying at the same hotel), and I noticed that he did not seem much buoyed up by the all-round hit we had made the night before, even though it secured the success of our engagement; and the papers had given us extraordinary notices. He seemed preoccupied, almost gloomy; which was something of a surprise to me, though, of course, I knew well enough what a moody fellow he was.

"A splendid fight you worked up with Bernard," I said as we reached the stage-door. "I hope you'll not let it down during the week."

"*I* did n't work it up," he grunted, passing in ahead of me. "And I don't think it will 'let down!'"

For a few moments, coming out of the morning sunlight into the darkness of the stage, I saw only the vague, unrecognizable forms of the members of the company waiting for the rehearsal of "As You Like It," which we were to do the next week. Mallory, whose eyes were weak, was feeling his way ahead of me, and together we fairly blundered into two people who were standing near the door. They were Gertrude and Bernard.

"What's this?" said Mallory roughly. "Why don't you get out of the way?"

"It's I, Ernest," his wife laughed cheerily. "I was congratulating Mr. Bernard on his beautiful work last night."

"Oh, you were!" Mallory's tone was not cordial. "I don't believe we'll take up any time with that; we'll get to work, if you please."

"But, Ernest," she protested, a little hurt, "we were only waiting for you. I——"

He brushed by her without waiting to hear more, and shouted to the stage-manager;

"Have it set." He was a rough man, sometimes, and though I liked him I could have shaken him by the shoulders for that; especially when, a little later, my eyes had accommodated themselves to the change of light and I saw how hurt his wife looked, and that her lip trembled a little now and then. But Bernard, shorn of his splendid proportions, no *Tybalt* now, but a lank and shabby property-man, went humbly about his duties without an upward glance. I think all of the others were, like myself, surprised to see no change in him, no sign of elation or self-satisfaction such as might have been expected, for he had been more than "mentioned" in most of the papers, and one of them had wondered where Mallory had "discovered" him.

No one would have been astonished if Bernard had gone to Mallory, that morning, and asked for a larger salary. He did nothing of the sort, however; on the contrary, he did not visibly exhibit any disappointment that Mallory showed no intention of casting him for another part when his week of *Tybalt* should be over. He was just the same whispering drudge that he had been all season.

All the more incredible was his *Tybalt*, at night. There was no falling off in his work during the week; not that he was merely a "conscientious actor," as the phrase goes to describe a player who always does his best, but the man seemed to grow in fire and intensity, and, as Mallory had predicted, the fight did not "let down." I had never seen anything like it, and, in truth, we found that the town talked of it, for it grew more furiously exciting each night; and my heart would jump as I watched it from the wings. On Friday night, it seemed to me that the fencing went quite wild; it was totally unlike the rehearsed fight, and I got very nervous before it was over. *Tybalt* began by forcing *Romeo* to give back; drove him half across the stage, in fact; with streaming "cut-and-thrusts" that looked like forked lightning; and when it was finished, I saw big drops on Mallory's forehead.

There was no matinée, the next afternoon; and Mallory had asked me to come up to his apartment to talk over some business. It was a little after two when I knocked at the door of the suite he had with his wife, and just as my knuckles touched the panel, I heard his voice within, loud and angry. I would have gone away, but it was too late.

"Come in," he said, throwing open the door. His face was flushed, and he was breathing hard; while Gertrude sat at a table, where they had been having lunch, trying as hard as she could to keep from letting me see that she was crying.

"I'll come in later," I said. "Had n't I better ——"

"No!" exclaimed Mallory roughly. "It 's nothing. Come in."

I did so; there was n't anything else for it; and he closed the door.

"Gertrude is too soft-hearted," he said, turning to his wife, "that 's all. It 's because Bernard's got his notice."

"You 're going to let him go!" I cried.

"I want to be rid of him," he answered. "I don't want him in my company, and it 's Gertrude's whim to keep him."

Mrs. Mallory looked up at her husband, and put her hand on his arm. "It 's only that I don't want you to be unjust. If you were fair you 'd give him a chance; you 'd not punish him for the splendid work he 's been doing; you 'd reward him. And it is splendid work — I 've watched him ——"

"Yes," he said harshly. "I know you have!"

She looked dazed for a moment and, I imagine, so did I, as the incredible suspicion came to both of us that he had a flash of jealousy of the property-man. Then she said sharply:

"Is that why you drop him?"

"Pooh!" he returned, oddly enough, seeming to be somewhat relieved at this. "Don't be absurd, Gertie! I don't care what kind of work he does. I don't want him, and that 's all there is to it."

"Why don't you want him?"

"Because he tries to take the stage; he keeps sneaking into the center and ——"

"Oh!" she cried. "That 's shameful of you! You know it is n't so!"

Mallory did know it was not the truth, which made the self-control he showed all the more admirable.

"Come," he said to me, turning to the door. "We 'll step down to your room and leave Gertrude to herself for a while. She 's tired and nervous."

We went to my room in silence, and there he flung himself in a chair and asked for a drink. "I knew it was n't true, of course," he groaned. "That confounded fellow 's got me all unstrung. *I* can't tell her the real reason I want to get rid of him."

"Do you think he's queer?" I asked, "You mean —— "

"*Queer!*" Mallory laughed. "Have you ever seen his fingers at rest, even when he tries to hold them so? Have n't you noticed that whisper of his, that —— "

"Yes, but I did n't suppose you had."

"Am I blind? Are you the only man in the world with eyes in your head?"

"Then you do think he 's crazy?"

For answer Mallory asked another question, abruptly: "Have you ever seen him look at Gertrude?"

I hesitated. "Oh, I see!" he said. "You have — and thought I 'd never noticed that either! Yes, he 's crazy — crazy as a March hare — and he 's in love with my wife just the same as if he were sane! Can I tell her *that?* No, I can't! She 'd be insulted; if I said one word she 'd think I was jealous of this rat! And she 'd never understand just what is the matter with *me* — which is that I 'm mad all through at the impertinence of it! The rat — the wretched little rat! Don't you see how he loves his stage-fight with me and why? And why it 's such a "go", and why I have to let it be? Don't you understand how this fellow feels when he gets into his 'fats' and make-up, and furbelows at night? Why, he struts on, and for the while, by God, he pretends to himself that he 's my rival!" He got up and paced the floor. "The impudence of it!" he stormed. "The damned impudence of it!"

I understood Mallory's feeling pretty thoroughly, and yet I must say I felt sorry for poor Bernard. So much so, that when I met him outside my dressing-room door that night I offered him my hand and told him I regretted to hear that he was leaving the company, and that I was sure he would get a good engagement through his notices. He did not seem to hear what I said, and, after pausing listlessly, passed on with a look so like that of a stricken and dazed animal that I felt even sorrier for him than before. He stepped only a few feet from me, and stopped. Then he turned and actually gibbered at me. He seemed to catch himself up suddenly, said "Thank you," quietly, and went on.

It 's an old phrase, that one about "feeling something clutch at your throat," and it 's an old superstition to explain a kind of shiver running up and down your spine by saying that somebody is walking across the place where your grave is to be; but I give you my word I felt both of these things when *Tybalt* made his entrance for the duel scene, three-quarters of an hour later. There was something wild and triumphant about him, and a something I can't find a truer word for than deadly, a something like the warning of danger that emanates without words from a figure that comes toward you in a dream.

At *Romeo's* entrance, *Tybalt's* line is: "*Here comes my man.*" The way Bernard spoke it reminded me suddenly of a sickening thing I once saw in the streets of a town in New Mexico. I can't otherwise describe it. I mumbled my answering lines. My own fight with *Tybalt* had been tame enough throughout the week, and it was so to-night; but the close of it did not seem tame to me. When I fell back in *Benvolio's* arms, the front of my close crimson doublet was hanging open in two flaps, showing my white shirt underneath. I had suffered the fate of Tomkins, and from the same cause, an accidental slash of the blade which the property-man had sharpened "for protection." It was in his hands to-night.

Dimly I heard Mallory's voice above me. "*What art thou hurt?*" Heard dimly because I was frightened. Not about myself, for nothing was injured but the cheap velvet.

"*Ay, ay, a scratch.*" Habit gave the line for me, and under my breath I spoke huskily — because, as I tell you, I was frightened. "Bernard has sharpened one of the swords. He has it to-night, and it cut this." And I showed him the slash, which was as neat as a razor-edge could have made. Then I went on aloud, but uncertainly, with "*A plague o' both your houses.*" When the speech was finished, I leaned toward Mallory whispering: "For God's sake take care! He *is* insane! Won't you ring down?"

"*I!* Ring down for that rat!" said Mallory.

Benvolio was helping me off. "Take care, take care!" was all I could whisper then.

Yes, I was as thoroughly frightened as I have ever been in my life. I stood in the wings and shook. Across from me I saw Mrs. Mallory in the opposite wing, standing quietly, her sweet face a little sorrowful, and there was a stir and movement in the audience, which betokened their pleased expectancy of the sensational fight which was one of the reasons for their coming. Our press agent had starred the duel after the first night, and the papers had printed a great

deal about the real danger to the participants. If the owners of the rows of smug faces in front had thought it one-tenth as dangerous as I did, I doubt if that expectancy of theirs would have been so pleasant.

When *Tybalt* came on, I saw Mallory take a deep breath and moisten his lips. Well he might! There was nothing left in his antagonist's face except wildness and hate. It was the most utterly insane face I ever saw, and it seemed to me that the audience and the other actors must be as mad as he not to see it; but, save for the little flurry of cheerful excitement in front, everybody was as calm as on any other night. I thought of what Mallory must be feeling, and it made me sick and faint. I turned away.

Then I heard the swords ring together, and knew they had begun. I looked again unwillingly. Mallory's back was toward me and he was giving ground, as the other forced him. He kept moving backward rapidly till he was near the wings, within a few feet of me; then he wheeled, facing the audience and bringing Bernard between it and himself, his own back to the drop. This turn brought the fencers in profile to me, and I saw all their movements clearly. Mallory was only guarding; it was all he could do; hacking away with all his strength to keep the other's sword down. With his left hand he was tugging at his throat, apparently trying to unfasten the clasp of the short velvet cloak he wore. Bernard was stabbing at Mallory's breast, intently. Across his shoulder I saw the face of Gertrude suddenly alter and become strained and tense, as the new position of the antagonists revealed them and Bernard's action more clearly to her as well as to me. She leaned far forward toward them, and I saw the quick alarm spring to her eyes as she saw Bernard's face and what he was doing. A bit of severed lace fell from Mallory's throat. And then I heard her shaking voice call the words my own lips were tremblingly framing:

"Ring down the curtain!"

"*No!*" said Mallory.

At the same instant he swung loose his cloak, and, with his left hand swathed in the thick velvet, caught the other's blade and leaped at him. There was a blow half-muffled, half-metallic, as Mallory brought the hilt of his sword violently up under the property-man's jaw; a half-choked and wholly inhuman scream from Bernard as he went over backward. He moved his arms feebly and then lay still. In the wings opposite, people were bending over another figure which lay quite as still as he. Gertrude had fainted.

Within two minutes Mallory was in the wings, standing over his wife, whom they had lifted to a bench. She was out of her faint by the time he reached her, and all she wanted was to get up and put her arms about him. "Wait a minute!" he said to her, and he began hurrying the *Prince*, the attendants and the others on. "Rush the scene!" he vociferated. "Rush it! If he comes to before the curtain I 'll *destroy* you!'

I had hurried across behind the back drop, and stood near him as he hustled them on. Then he turned to Gertrude.

But I looked out at the poor heap of gaudy finery upon the stage and wondered — and wondered. . . .

"Everything's all right," I heard Mallory telling his wife, "especially part of it that you don't understand! And after all," he went on briskly, "I 'm glad I did n't let that ass of a Tomkins play it again."

Everything was all right! Bernard regained his consciousness but not his reason, in an ambulance. Poor *Tybalt!*

I met Gertrude and her husband last winter, one day when we happened to be playing in the same town, and we spoke of him. "Poor 'props,'" she said, as Mallory walked a little way ahead of us, "he really was a good actor, was n't he? Do you know, frightened as I had been, yet, when they were carrying him away, that night, it was all I could do to keep from crying."

The young man leaned back in his corner of the divan with every appearance of finality. "But that is n't the end!" cried one of the listeners.

"Perhaps you are right," returned the story-teller. "I was to tell you the strangest experience in my recollections, and I believe I have omitted the strangest part of it."

"What was that?" we urged.

"The people in front that last night did not hear the call to ring down. And you remember that Mallory worked round to the back, keeping Bernard in front of him?"

"Yes, yes."

"The audience were much disappointed in the fight. They considered it rather tame!"

Drawn by Sigismond de Ivanowski

"IT WAS THE MOST UTTERLY INSANE FACE I EVER SAW"

AN UNFINISHED STORY

BY

O. HENRY

AUTHOR OF "CABBAGES AND KINGS," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY JAY HAMBIDGE

WE no longer groan and heap ashes upon our heads when the flames of Tophet are mentioned. For, even the preachers have begun to tell us that God is radium, or ether, or some scientific compound, and that the worst we wicked ones may expect is a chemical reaction. This is a pleasing hypothesis; but there lingers yet some of the old, goodly terror of orthodoxy.

There are but two subjects upon which one may discourse with a free imagination, and without the possibility of being controverted. You may talk of your dreams; and you may tell what you heard a parrot say. Both Morpheus and the bird are incompetent witnesses; and your listener dare not attack your recital. The baseless fabric of a vision, then, shall furnish my theme — chosen with apologies and regrets instead of the more limited field of pretty Polly's small talk.

I had a dream that was so far removed from the higher criticism that it had to do with the ancient, respectable, and lamented bar-of-judgment theory.

Gabriel had played his trump; and those of us who could not follow suit were arraigned for examination. I noticed at one side a gathering of professional bondsmen in solemn black and collars that buttoned behind; but it seemed there was some trouble about their real estate titles; and they did not appear to be getting any of us out.

A fly cop — an angel policeman — flew over to me and took me by the left wing. Near at hand was a group of very prosperous-looking spirits arraigned for judgment.

"Do you belong with that bunch?" the policeman asked.

"Who are they?" was my answer.

"Why," said he, "they are —— "

But this irrelevant stuff is taking up space that the story should occupy.

Dulcie worked in a department store. She sold Hamburg edging, or stuffed peppers, or automobiles, or other little trinkets such as they keep in department stores. Of what she earned, Dulcie received six dollars per week. The remainder was credited to her and debited to somebody else's account in the ledger kept by G — Oh! primal energy, you say, Reverend Doctor — well then, in the Ledger of Primal Energy.

During her first year in the store, Dulcie was paid five dollars per week. It would be instructive to know how she lived on that amount. Don't care? Very well; probably you are interested in larger amounts. Six dollars is a larger amount. I will tell you how she lived on six dollars per week.

One afternoon at six, when Dulcie was sticking her hat-pin within an eighth of an inch of her *medulla oblongata*, she said to her chum, Sadie — the girl that waits on you with her left side:

"Say, Sade, I made a date for dinner this evening with Piggy."

"You never did!" exclaimed Sadie admiringly. "Well, ain't you the lucky one? Piggy's an awful swell; and he always takes a girl to swell places. He took Blanche up to the Hoffman House one evening, where they have swell music, and you see a lot of swells. You 'll have a swell time, Dulce."

Dulcie hurried homeward. Her eyes were shining, and her cheeks showed the delicate pink of life's — real life's approaching dawn. It was Friday; and she had fifty cents left of her last week's wages.

The streets were filled with the rush-hour floods of people. The electric lights of Broadway were glowing — calling moths

from miles, from leagues, from hundreds of leagues out of darkness around to come in and attend the singeing school. Men in accurate clothes, with faces like those carved on cherry stones by the old salts in sailors' homes, turned and stared at Dulcie as she sped, unheeding, past them. Manhattan, the night-blooming cereus, was beginning to unfold its dead-white, heavy-odored petals.

Dulcie stopped in a store where goods were cheap, and bought an imitation lace collar with her fifty cents. That money was to have been spent otherwise — fifteen cents for supper, ten cents for breakfast, ten cents for lunch. Another dime was to be added to her small store of savings; and five cents was to be squandered for licorice drops — the kind that make your cheek look like the toothache, and last as long. The licorice was an extravagance — almost a carouse — but what is life without pleasures?

Dulcie lived in a furnished room. There is this difference between a furnished room and a boarding-house. In a furnished room, other people do not know it when you go hungry.

Dulcie went up to her room — the third floor back in a West Side brownstone-front. She lit the gas. Scientists tell us that the diamond is the hardest substance known. Their mistake. Landladies know of a compound beside which the diamond is as putty. They pack it in the tips of gas-burners; and one may stand on a chair and dig at it in vain until one's fingers are pink and bruised. A hairpin will not remove it; therefore let us call it immovable.

So Dulcie lit the gas. In its one-fourth-candle-power glow we will observe the room.

Couch-bed, dresser, table, washstand, chair — of this much the landlady was guilty. The rest was Dulcie's. On the dresser were her treasures — a gilt china vase presented to her by Sadie, a calendar issued by a pickle works, a book on the divination of dreams, some rice powder in a glass dish, and a cluster of artificial cherries tied with a pink ribbon. Against the wrinkly mirror stood pictures of General Kitchener, William Muldoon, the Duchess of Marlborough, and Benvenuto Cellini. Against one wall was a plaster of Paris plaque of an O'Callahan in a Roman helmet. Near it was a violent oleograph of a lemon-colored child assaulting an inflammatory butterfly. This was Dulcie's final judgment in art; but it had never been upset. Her rest had never been disturbed by whispers of stolen copes; no critic had elevated his eyebrows at her infantile entomologist.

Piggy was to call for her at seven. While she swiftly makes ready, let us discreetly face the other way and gossip.

For the room, Dulcie paid two dollars per week. On week-days her breakfast cost ten cents: she made coffee and cooked an egg over the gaslight while she was dressing. On Sunday mornings she feasted royally on veal chops and pineapple fritters at "Billy's" restaurant, at a cost of twenty-five cents — and tipped the waitress ten cents. New York presents so many temptations for one to run into extravagance. She had her lunches in the department-store restaurant at a cost of sixty cents for the week: dinners were $1.05. The evening papers — show me a New Yorker going without his daily paper! — came to six cents; and two Sunday papers — one for the personal column and the other to read — were ten cents. The total amounts to $4.76. Now, one has to buy clothes and ——

I give it up. I hear of wonderful bargains in fabrics, and of miracles performed with needle and thread; but I am in doubt. I hold my pen poised in vain when I would add to Dulcie's life some of those joys that belong to woman by virtue of all the unwritten, sacred, natural, inactive ordinances of the equity of heaven. Twice she had been to Coney Island and had ridden the hobby-horses. 'T is a weary thing to count your pleasures by summers instead of by hours.

Piggy needs but a word. When the girls named him, an undeserved stigma was cast upon the noble family of swine. The words-of-three-letters lesson in the old blue spelling book begins with Piggy's biography. He was fat; he had the soul of a rat, the habits of a bat, and the magnanimity of a cat. . . . He wore expensive clothes; and was a connoisseur in starvation. He could look at a shop-girl and tell you to an hour how long it had been since she had eaten anything more nourishing than marshmallows and tea. He hung about the shopping districts, and prowled around in department stores with his invitations to dinner. Men who escort dogs upon the streets at the end of a string look down upon him. He is a type: I can dwell upon him no longer; my pen is not the kind intended for him; I am no carpenter.

At ten minutes to seven Dulcie was ready. She looked at herself in the wrinkly mirror.

Drawn by Jay Hambidge

"SHE DREW UP A CHAIR TO THE RICKETY TABLE, AND TOLD HER FORTUNE WITH AN OLD DECK OF CARDS"

The reflection was satisfactory. The dark blue dress, fitting without a wrinkle, the hat with its jaunty black feather, the but-slightly-soiled gloves — all representing self-denial, even of food itself — were vastly becoming.

Dulcie forgot everything else for a moment except that she was beautiful, and that life was about to lift a corner of its mysterious veil for her to observe its wonders. No gentleman had ever asked her out before. Now she was going for a brief moment into the glitter and exalted show.

The girls said that Piggy was a "spender." There would be a grand dinner, and music, and splendidly dressed ladies to look at, and things to eat that strangely twisted the girls' jaws when they tried to tell about them. No doubt she would be asked out again. There was a blue pongee suit in a window that she knew — by saving twenty cents a week instead of ten, in — let's see — Oh, it would run into years! But there was a second-hand store in Seventh Avenue where ——

Somebody knocked at the door. Dulcie opened it. The landlady stood there with a spurious smile, sniffing for cooking by stolen gas.

"A gentleman's down-stairs to see you," she said. "Name is Mr. Wiggins."

By such epithet was Piggy known to unfortunate ones who had to take him seriously.

Dulcie turned to the dresser to get her handkerchief; and then she stopped still, and bit her under-lip hard. While looking in her mirror she had seen fairyland and herself, a princess, just awakening from a long slumber. She had forgotten one that was watching her with sad, beautiful, stern eyes — the only one there was to approve or condemn what she did. Straight and slender and tall, with a look of sorrowful reproach on his handsome, melancholy face, General Kitchener fixed his wonderful eyes on her out of his gilt photograph frame on the dresser.

Dulcie turned like an automatic doll to the landlady.

"Tell him I can't go," she said dully. "Tell him I 'm sick, or something. Tell him I 'm not going out."

After the door was closed and locked, Dulcie fell upon her bed, crushing her black tip, and cried for ten minutes. General Kitchener was her only friend. He was Dulcie's ideal of a gallant knight. He looked as if he might have a secret sorrow, and his wonderful mustache was a dream, and she was a little afraid of that stern yet tender look in his eyes. She used to have little fancies that he would call at the house sometime, and ask for her, with his sword clanking against his high boots. Once, when a boy was rattling a piece of chain against a lamp-post she had opened the window and looked out. But there was no use. She knew that General Kitchener was away over in Japan, leading his army against the savage Turks; and he would never step out of his gilt frame for her. Yet one look from him had vanquished Piggy that night. Yes, for that night.

When her cry was over Dulcie got up and took off her best dress, and put on her old blue kimono. She wanted no dinner. She sang two verses of "Sammy." Then she became intensely interested in a little red speck on the side of her nose. And after that was attended to, she drew up a chair to the rickety table, and told her fortune with an old deck of cards.

"The horrid, impudent thing!" she said aloud. "And I never gave him a word or a look to make him think it!"

At nine o'clock Dulcie took a tin box of crackers and a little pot of raspberry jam out of her trunk, and had a feast. She offered General Kitchener some jam on a cracker; but he only looked at her as the sphinx would have looked at a butterfly — if there are butterflies in the desert.

"Don't eat it if you don't want to," said Dulcie. "And don't put on so many airs and scold so with your eyes. I wonder if you 'd be so superior and snippy if you had to live on six dollars a week."

It was not a good sign for Dulcie to be rude to General Kitchener. And then she turned Benvenuto Cellini face downward with a severe gesture. But that was not inexcusable; for she had always thought he was Henry VIII, and she did not approve of him.

At half-past nine Dulcie took a last look at the pictures on the dresser, turned out the light, and skipped into bed. It is an awful thing to go to bed with a good-night look at General Kitchener, William Muldoon, the Duchess of Marlborough, and Benvenuto Cellini.

This story really does n't get anywhere at all. The rest of it comes later — sometime when

Piggy asks Dulcie again to dine with him, and she is feeling lonelier than usual, and General Kitchener happens to be looking the other way; and then ——

As I said before, I dreamed that I was standing near a crowd of prosperous-looking angels, and a policeman took me by the wing and asked if I belonged with them.

"Who are they?" I asked.

"Why," said he, "they are the men who hired working-girls, and paid 'em five or six dollars a week to live on. Are you one of the bunch?"

"Not on your immortality," said I. "I 'm only the fellow that set fire to an orphan asylum, and murdered a blind man for his pennies."

A POLITICAL TIP

BY

MARY RAYMOND SHIPMAN ANDREWS

AUTHOR OF "A GOOD SAMARITAN," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR I. KELLER

IT was the fifth green. The two caddies slid the putters into the bags with one hand and slipped the drivers automatically out toward the players with the other. The men caught the bulgy heads and swung the clubs about as they walked away to the next tee. The caddies, the bag-straps over their shoulders, ran jingling up the hillside and squatted half-way, expectant.

But the players were deliberate. The large man brought out a large handkerchief and mopped himself carefully and sat down on a bench in the shadow of a tree, and the other, slender and boyish at forty-five, the cadet of the United States Senate, rolled his sleeves up farther on his muscular arms, and then swung his driver with infinite pains, infinite exactness of form, half a dozen times at a belated clover head. The man's soul was on his full St. Andrews's stroke; one would have thought that the following through of the club was of more importance to him than the swinging of the political machine, which also lay this autumn, people said, in those slight and strong wrists.

The caddies, perched motionless on the hillside, like sphinxes of a brownie pattern, watched in brooding silence. Caddies miss little, and men's souls are often an open book to them. The fat man's boy spoke first.

"Jones is het up," he observed, with that reverence of spirit toward superiors which one remarks in caddies.

"Huh!" the other answered oracularly. "I know what 's het him."

"You 're smart," Jones's boy retorted with sarcasm. "So d' I. 'Cause it 's hot."

"Naw," the Delphic oracle shook his head. "'T ain't so much the weather 's it 's his rotten playin.' 'T ain't so hot. Look at the Senator. He ain't sweatin'."

"He ain't stout," argued the Jones partizan. "An' he ain't got Jones beat yet, nohow. He 's only three holes up on him."

"The Senator can do Jones any day," said the Senator's caddy with firmness. "He 's got him rattled now. Jones played that last hole durn bad"— which had been Jones's own statement, and was therefore perhaps correct. "What 's more," the boy continued, launching into side issues, "the Senator can handle Jones in politics. I heard Abner H. Green say that."

Abner H. Green was the president of the golf club, so there seemed no going beyond this dictum. The Jones boy looked dejected.

"Did you?" he inquired lamely, and then his face brightened. "Well, now," he began excitedly, "now you listen. My pa said —"

"Huh," was the brief interruption of the Senator's caddy. Its force was felt by the other.

SENATOR MUIR

"'I guess governors is higher'n any kinder senators, united or nothin', so there!'"

"You can 'huh' till you bust, but my pa he knows," he asserted indignantly. "He reads two papers an' he knows — an' he said — an' I tole him — an' I tole him I 'd caddied for Milton B. Jones an' he said he was a big man, an' he ran some kinder machine an' anyway he said he was the pres'dent of the Publican committee, an' he said he could handle the men like he pleased. So —" The Jones caddy glared.

But the senatorial caddy had not weathered thirteen hoary winters for nothing. "Chairman of th' Republicum State Committee — I guess I know that," he corrected scornfully. An' I don't care 'f he is. Abner H. Green said the Senator could handle him. — I guess he 'd oughter know — he 's pres'dent this golf club. That 's all I know, but it 's 'bout enough." He relapsed into stately silence.

The Jones boy was staggered, but having missed his shot, risked a blow with the butt of the musket. "Huh! what 's a senator anyhow?" he inquired with bitter contempt. "You need n't think you 've got the only pebble on the beach. I caddied for just as good a senator's your'n, only yesterday. That 's him now," and he nodded back over the grassy stretch where, on the green of the last hole, apart from a group of three others, a tall figure stood etched against the sky.

The older boy smiled ironically. "Him? Oh, yes, he 's one all right, and he 's a nice man is Senator Muir. But they 's different kinds of senators, they is, an' he ain't the first kind. I heard Green tellin' his cousin, that was visitin' him, that Muir was n't nothin' but a state senator, an' my man, Duke," he nodded toward the tee, "was a — was a — United senator, I guess he said."

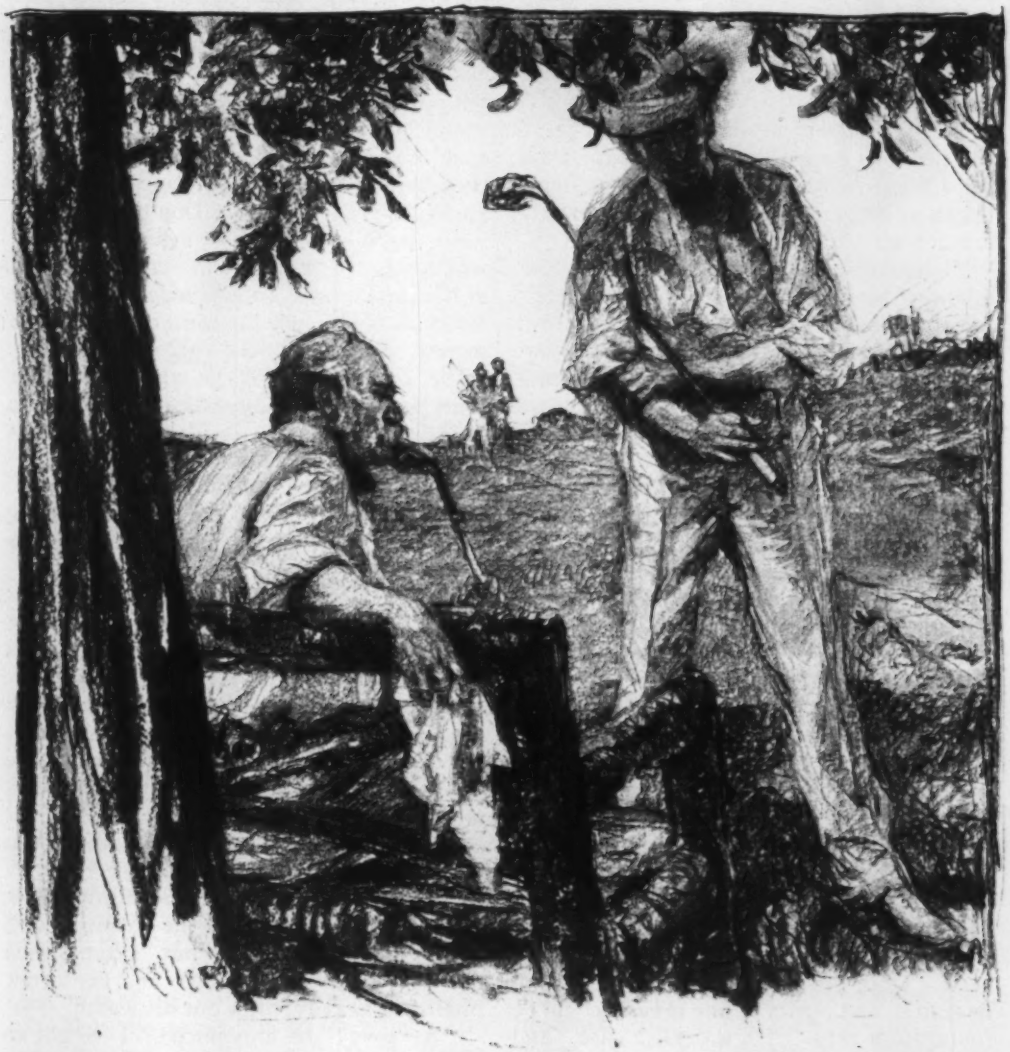
The other boy turned a triumphant face on him quickly. "I guess you did hear that, and I guess you heard more 'n that, 'cause I was there that day, an' Abner H. Green said how all the same it looked like Muir were goin' to be next governor. I

guess governors is higher 'n any kinder senators, united or nothin,' so there!"

The older boy shifted his caddy-bag with a rattle, and spat manfully. "We wuz talkin' 'bout Jones's game," he stated impressively.

Down on the bench by the tee there had been political conversation also. The situation as sketched by the two caddies was more or less assumed by the two players. Jones, his handkerchief still in his hand, and his hand on his fat knee, gazed thoughtfully up the hill where he would fain send his next ball, and listened to the Senator who, sitting beside him, beat the earth between his feet with the head of his driver as he talked. And as he talked he lifted his eyes to the narrow path down which they had come. Another pair of caddies ran jingling up the hill to join the first, and down the path two men were nearing them. The leader was a tall man of perhaps sixty years with a distinction about him, the look which should go with race but which is sometimes misplaced and fitted to simple character. So it happened that Cecil Duke, the United States senator, with the bluest blood of the country in him, was small and insignificant, while this

"'My advice is to nail the man we are sure of'"



self-made man who began life as a shopkeeper in a small town had the air of a prince. He stopped and stood silent, friendly, as he saw the two on the bench. Duke spoke.

"Pass us, won't you, Senator Muir," he said. "I 've done up Jones and he 's got to resuscitate before we play this hole."

Muir went straight to the sand-box as he answered in half a dozen words. "Thank you," he said. "I hope Mr. Jones will recover. It 's seldom fatal," and there was a clean cut sound as his driver struck the ball, and a whirr as it rose and soared up, far up the hill over the worst in the course.

All four watched spellbound as Muir's caddy ran on and on up the slope, and stopped well over its brow.

"Beauty!" pronounced the Senator, and Jones sighed.

"Must be two hundred yards," he said solemnly.

The new comers strode off, and the eyes of the two met each other. There was silence for a long minute, and the Senator suddenly began as if taking up a conversation where it had been dropped.

"I regard it mostly as a question of confidence," he said. "Muir is the abler man; he would make the better governor. But it is important — it is absolutely necessary, as you know, Jones, that the next governor should not obstruct this street-railroad franchise tax bill of ours. And now comes a fact which I have just learned, the fact to which I referred in my letter. I understand Muir has large interests in the street railways in Rivertown, and this bill would cut into them severely. You can't expect the man to be anxious for a measure that would take twenty-five thousand dollars out of his pocket.

The chairman stuck out his under lip. "Muir told me that he approved of the bill — that he hoped its passage would not be obstructed."

"So he said to me also," the Senator agreed. "And if he is a man of exceptional honor he may be sincere. But it is a danger. It would be a temptation to many men, to take the governorship on the understanding that he must sacrifice the money, and then, balk at throwing away twenty-five thousand. Once governor he can pass that bill or veto it, and plenty of fine reasons could be found for a veto. It 's a ticklish case," and the Senator batted the sand firmly with his driver.

Jones rubbed his damp handkerchief considerингly over his bald head. "He 's the best candidate we have to put forward," he said. "Popular, very popular. And a man of brains. But of course there 's Harrison; the convention will divide between these two. We can count on Harrison for doing as we wish."

"That 's just where it is," agreed the Senator. "We can count on Harrison and we can't on Muir. Muir is a devil of a chap for reserve. I can't make him out. He may be as high-minded and simple as he appears, and he may be deep and slippery. I wish I knew."

"We know Harrison," Jones suggested.

The Senator smiled sarcastically. "He 's not difficult. It 's too bad to give the people a figure-head for a governor, but it won't be the first time, and he 's not a bad sort. We could put him through. Yet Muir would make a fine chief executive — we could be proud of him." He stopped and then went on. "He has n't an idea I know about that stock of his. Don't mention it, for it might complicate things. You and I will decide this nomination," and he looked at the perspiring chairman and almost added aloud —"and I will decide you." But he merely elaborated the other statement. "The convention will be about even for Muir and Harrison; we 'll merely have to swing a few votes to decide it. And it all hangs, rather curiously, on a moral point — whether Muir is or is not to be relied upon."

"My advice is to nail the man we are sure of," said the chairman, and the Senator arose.

"I 'm inclined to think so, but the convention is not until Friday and this is Tuesday. Now let 's play golf — that 's more important. My honor, is n't it?"

He put his hand deep into the box of wet sand and patted a tee into shape and laid a ball tenderly on its peak. He swung the driver once again and then took his position in careful form. "Fore!" he shouted across the little valley, and the caddies, deep in discussion, jumped and stood alert.

Half an hour later, on the ninth green, close by the club-house, the Senator with a theatrical twelve foot put accomplished the destruction of Mr. Jones, and the latter, breathing heavily, drew out his watch

"By Jove!" he announced, "I 've got to run for it to make that car. Senator, will you pay my caddy — see you to-morrow."

"'I 'm afraid I 've talked to you so much you 're tired out sir'"

and he disappeared into the house with lumbering celerity.

The Senator poured silver into one hand with the other, and drew the caddies into conversation as he counted, for he was by way of being an amateur in humanity, this man of the world who had been born well and bred well and had lived well, who had seen most of the complicated phases of society which the world has to show, and had come by that circuitous route to the knowledge of the charm of simplicity. He liked to hear these boys talk for the raw human nature which sunned itself, unshadowed by conventionality, in their startling sentences. Smiling to himself over the remarks of the youngsters he sauntered, his bag over his shoulder, toward the club-house.

There were few women at the Country Club to-day and the men were all out playing on the links — the house looked quite deserted. But in one corner of the broad piazza sat a small figure in a quaker-like gray gown, and as the Senator, coming up,

"MRS. MUIR LISTENED SPELLBOUND"

looked curiously at this slightly incongruous apparition where smart women in smart clothes filled, ordinarily, the scene, he saw that she was knitting with lavender wool.

He stopped short, and caught his breath, for like the magic of a developer poured on the blankness of a film, a picture which lay always sleeping in a deep place of his heart flashed into light at the sight of the simple business. There had been an old aunt of his in an ancestral farmhouse in Connecticut who had meant much to his boyhood, who had kept a gentle hold on his manhood until one June day only a year ago she had made the change, to her mind not a great one, from New England to heaven. When he saw the little woman tranquilly knitting on the Country Club piazza he smelled suddenly the yellow roses that grew under the dining-room window at Elmfield; he was on the side porch of the old shingled house, and the late afternoon sun lay in streaks over the board floor; across the garden, against the cedar-hedge, blazed the blue of serried ranks of larkspur; Aunt Rosina sat in the rocking-chair he remembered; her needles flashed through the silvery shimmer of lavender wool, and her voice called him again as he had loved to hear it always, "My boy."

The Senator was all at once aware that he was standing transfixed on the edge of the green, and staring brazenly at a stranger. He moved slowly in, but his eyes dwelt still as he moved, lingeringly, on the sober little figure, and as he looked he saw the ball of wool fall and roll softly toward him. He sprang to pick it up eagerly — he had so many times picked up big, soft lilac balls like this — and laying down his clubs he held it toward her with a smile.

"I hope it is n't soiled," he said — the Senator's manner could be very winning when he chose.

"Thank you, sir, very much"— there was distinct primness and shyness in the old-fashioned speech, but the Senator liked it. He held the light round mass in his hand a moment more, making a pretext of brushing off dust.

"It is a very pretty color," he ventured, and a pair of startled blue eyes met his with pleased wonder, eyes that shining from under gray hair and set in a face touched with wrinkles, yet were in all essentials sixteen-year-old eyes.

"*I* think it 's pretty," she agreed and then, as if yielding to temptation, she went on in a voice shy at first, but gathering assurance. "They laugh at me at home and say I 'm foolish over lavender. But it seems to me when a woman gets to my age, and it is n't just proper to wear red, and pink, and blue any more, a touch of color is a real pleasure." She stopped and looked at him a trifle apologetically, a little startled at the boldness of the adventure.

The Senator kept his eyes firmly on the knitting, and his matter-of-fact, friendly voice was reassuring. "Indeed I don't see why you should n't wear the pinks and blues," he said with a sort of gentle authority, as he might have said it to Aunt Rosina. "I think you — I think it would be charming," and he lifted his gaze to see a flush creeping over the delicate wrinkles and making the childlike old face, as he had said, charming. It had been a very pretty girl who had evolved into this staid and quaker-like little woman of sixty, and the beauty and the youth were part of her yet. He went on quickly, for the shy look in those girlish blue eyes —"But there is nothing prettier than lavender, and I like very much to see women — to see ladies knitting." He knew by instinct that it would please her better to have him say "ladies" than "women." Even to-day, in the country, the emancipated, straight-from-the-shoulder word "women" has a slightly rough sound to the ear.

"Do you?" she asked with quick interest, her touch of embarrassment gone. "Does your mother do much knitting work? Or your wife?"

The Senator smiled as he had a vision of his last glimpse of his mother, gorgeous in a Paris gown at the head of a glittering dinner-table. "No," he said gently, "I have no wife, and it was n't my mother I was thinking of, but an aunt of whom I was very fond. May I sit down and talk to you a little while?" he asked, drawing a chair towards her.

"Certainly — I would be pleased to have you," and there was a sudden access of primness again. But the Senator knew now how to put her at ease.

"What is it you 're making?" he inquired turning a glance of ignorant masculine appreciation at the soft pile in her lap.

She held it up to show him. "It 's a sort of shawl to throw over your shoulders on cool evenings," she explained earnestly. "We used to call all such things 'fascinators,'

but that word is going out of fashion now, I'm told. You gentlemen don't know much about them, I presume," and she smiled at him as if making allowance. Then she went on cheerily. "The ladies around here don't do much fancy work, I've noticed, but my! you waste a power of time if you sit with your fingers idle here at the Country Club. Jim — my husband, likes I should come out with him while he's playing the golf, and it's real pretty and I enjoy it. We haven't lived here but two months and I don't know many of the ladies yet, but they seem nice and friendly, what I do know, and last Saturday they made me take tea and cakes with them — it was very enjoyable."

The Senator had a sudden inspiration to order tea, but he controlled it — that might stiffen her into shyness again. As it was she talked on happily — she was evidently a great talker in an intermittent way, and there was something attractive to the man of the world in the unconscious, old-fashioned sentences. It was like the flow of a stream through green meadows to one who has lived on the banks of a manufacturing river.

"There isn't to be any tea this afternoon. The company is only Wednesdays and Saturdays," she informed him. "But it's real pleasant here when it's quiet, too. I don't know but I like it full as well. Jim has just started off for another nine holes as he calls it — it does his health good to play this game I'm sure, though it seems a mite silly to me, knocking little white balls for several miles with those crazy-shaped putter-sticks. I walked nearly around one day, but yet I couldn't quite understand the difference between a brassy and a foozle, and I'm sure it would take me a month to learn to do it real well."

"I'm afraid it would," the Senator agreed. "It has taken me longer, and I can't do it yet."

"They do say it's slow," said the little woman, "but of course I don't comprehend it much, if any. I wasn't brought up to play these newfangled things," and her eyes smiled a certain appeal to his friendliness, "so I'm a little mite stupid about them. But Jim is different, my husband. He's traveled a great deal — been to Europe once and to Washington five times, so he's seen all such things and he takes to them easily. First-off he was set on my going with him, but it was always preserving time, or else I had the spring house-cleaning on my hands, or else I was changing girls in the kitchen — always something so I couldn't go. And he would come back and tell me about everything, so I used to say to him it was just as good as going myself and a sight less expense. And I'm a little timid about meeting strangers, but Jim — why he never seems to think about himself. I believe if he was to meet the King of England he wouldn't give a thought to whether he was behaving the right way, but would just take an interest in the King to see if he was a smart man, and had brains enough to suit him. He's the least conceited of any person I know, but yet he never seems to have an idea that there's anybody any better than he is — that's Jim — Mr. Muir, I mean."

The Senator gave a slight start, but the little woman in the gray gown did not notice it. She was launched on a subject that pleased her and preoccupied with its interest.

"It's funny, isn't it, how folks change as they grow older?" she inquired. "Now when Jim and I kept company in Berryville — that's five miles from Rivertown — I was always called the lively one of the two. My father was the doctor and we had a big house and two horses, and we girls had lots of beaux and I was always one for going. But Jim, he was the son of the Presbyterian preacher, and a sort of quiet young fellow. He kept a little dry-goods store, first-off, but that was because he was poor and it was the best thing he could find to start with. He never liked that business — he always wanted to be a lawyer, as he was later. And he was always studying nights instead of beauing me to parties like the other young men. I think —" the blue eyes smiled with a reminiscent mischief — "I think maybe that was the reason I liked him — because I couldn't get him so easy. The other girls joked me a good deal when I took Jim. They said I would have to talk to him and then answer myself — he was that quiet. But I didn't care — I was smart enough to know a real man when I saw him." Her head gave a defiant little toss as if answering those laughing "girls" of forty years ago. "And father stood by me. He said to me 'Letitia you've done well. Jim's as good as gold and what's more, he's capable. And what's still more, he's a man of his word — character counts for success in the long run — you'll see." The little woman stopped a moment and her

face grew thoughtful. "Maybe father was right, but it don't seem so to me. Of course I would n't have Jim any other way, but I can't help seeing how keeping his word has n't meant success to him. He 's lost more 'n he 's gained that way, but still"—her face brightened —"still self-respect 's worth something, don't you think so?"

A few people had been coming and going at the other end of the big piazza while the two sat talking, and more than one had looked curiously to see the distinguished Senator, whose small, trim figure was well known in many societies, deep in conversation with an unknown little woman wearing a gown quite evidently the *chef-d'oeuvre* of a country dressmaker. A tall and handsome girl with a sophisticated face walked out from the house at this moment and called to him gaily.

"Senator, Senator — we 're having tea and drinks and no end of luxuries on the other gallery. Won't you come? We 're pining for you."

He was on his feet instantly, but did not move a step. "Thank you, Miss McAllister — I can't this afternoon. But you 'll give me a chance another day, won't you?" and he still stood firmly by his chair as she waited. So, tossing a sentence or two towards him, she went back as she had come, and he turned to Mrs. Muir. He frowned at the interruption as he saw that she was in a flutter of shy embarrassment.

"I won't detain you, sir," she began. "You must n't let me keep you from your lady friends. I can do very well alone and Jim — Mr. Muir — will be coming soon. Do join your friends, sir," and she tried to bow him away.

The Senator turned his back squarely to the door whence Miss McAllister had issued and sat down facing her, a little nearer than before. He smiled as a son might smile at his mother.

"I 'd so much rather stay with you," he said, and the charm of his manner and the sincerity of it had their way.

"I 've enjoyed visiting with you very much," and she regarded him doubtfully. "I 'd be pleased to have you stay, sir, if you really wish to."

"I really wish to," he answered, and she could not doubt him.

"I 'm afraid I 've been talking a sight of nonsense," she apologized. "Father used to say I was an awful steady talker, but Jim seems rather to like it, so I get into the habit."

The Senator had a pretty old-fashioned stateliness once in a while which he had caught from a fine old grandfather. "I have been not only interested but honored, Mrs. Muir, by everything that you have said to me," he assured her with an air, and the flattery of it went straight, as intelligent flattery always goes straight to a normal woman's heart. "But you were in the middle of things," he went on. "I wanted to hear what you were going to say."

"Probably was n't much" said Mrs. Muir. "I was talking about Jim as I remember — Mr. Muir, I mean. I started to call him the Senator first-off when he was made that, but he would n't let me — said it was n't good form. I don't know how on earth that man knows all the little wrinkles, but he does."

"Some people have a gift that way," said Duke gently. Then, as if touching with a light hand the lever of a delicate machine, "but you were going to tell me, I think, how your husband's honor for his word had hindered his success. Will you not?"

The man knew to a shade how much to dare, and a quality in his manner made it seem pleasant that he should dare more than other people. Instead of being frightened she was stimulated by this quiet demand on the intimacies of her history. She smiled at the Senator.

"Seems funny a stranger would care to hear about it," she said. "But my! I feel as if we were old friends by now. You seem sort of real homelike." She looked hard at him a moment, and her blue eyes took on a mistiness. "Jim and I had a boy once — he lived to be five. I always keep his birthdays, and if he 'd stayed he 'd have been almost your age, and seems to me he 'd have looked a little like you."

The Senator flushed, for his long youthfulness was a trial to him. "I 'm older than you think me," he said, and then — "But I am glad to remind you of your boy. And you 're going to tell me how your husband kept his word to his disadvantage are n't you?"

With that new thought of the likeness to the little face that had never grown dim in her memory, the woman would have gladly told him anything. A dimple flashed into her soft cheek. "Why yes, if you want to hear. Lots of times Jim's done that — kept his word when 't was n't to his good — but

this time I 'm thinking of was the most so. You see when father died my brother Tom was just growing up and we could all see that he was n't a reliable sort. Oh, a good boy you know, but full of wild ideas and and no head for business. So father, just before he died, made Jim promise he 'd stand by Tom as if he was his own brother, and see that he did n't get into trouble. And Jim promised, bless him. Tom worried along at this and that, and three or four times he failed for small amounts and Jim set him up again, and finally he settled pretty well, and for a year we thought he was going to do all right. And meantime Jim and I had been saving and we 'd got together a capital of ten thousand dollars, and Jim heard of the telephone business, which you know was new fifteen years ago. Well, he studied it and he made up his mind it was going to be a great thing. And so when the chance came along to invest in it he was ever so pleased, and decided he 'd put all our money, the ten thousand dollars, into it. Jim has lots of sense about such things and he seems to be able to tell beforehand what 's going to succeed. He 's never made a mistake."

The Senator smiled. "I 've heard that —" he began, and stopped short. "I 've heard it said that some men had that faculty," he completed.

"Yes, sir. Jim — Mr. Muir — is that way. So Jim was as sure as living that in five years our ten thousand dollars would be two hundred thousand and we had a sight of plans when just at that moment my brother Tom failed again. I don't understand much about business but I know that it was just ten thousand dollars that was needed to fix things and start Tom over. Well, that was a real hard time. Jim walked the floor all of one night, he hated so to give up that chance at the telephone business, and of course I was upset because of Jim and because of Tom. So finally, not thinking of myself but of Jim, I begged him to let Tom go. It was n't fair he should be sacrificed for a boy that did n't have it in him to succeed anyhow. I talked to Jim that way and begged him, and my sister Sophie, she came and talked the same. But Jim would n't consider of it for a moment, because he said he 'd given his word to father. He had to see that Tom should n't get into trouble and there was n't anything said about whether it was inconvenient to him — Jim said. Sophie and I were both real out of patience with him, but just the same he kept his word and started Tom all over and within the year Tom died, and then Jim felt kind of glad he 'd done it even if he 'd lost the chance of his life. And I guess it was that too, for I 've heard said that ten thousand dollars at that time would have been near half a million by now."

The pleasant voice with its slight burr, with its rural inflections here and there, had stopped, and there was silence on the large empty piazza. A locust's clear, strident call sang a short song of hot weather and still air, and ceased suddenly. The Senator — his hands clasped on one knee, his brows drawn together above eyes which gazed considerингly over the velvet ninth green and out beyond to tossing fields of rye, and spreading elms, and away where faint hills rimmed the horizon bluely — the Senator seemed lost in thought. So quiet he was that the little woman spoke timidly.

"I 'm afraid I 've talked to you so much you 're tired out, sir," she said, and at that he turned his eyes towards her and smiled almost tenderly, the smile of conscious strength towards unconscious and appealing weakness.

"I was thinking," he said, as if half speaking to himself, "that so intricate are the workings of the mills which grind men's motives and actions that a good deed thrown into the wheels in darkness might yet come out into the light as a crown of glory. Bread cast upon the waters sometimes takes such a winding way for its return and comes back so changed that the original morsel may not always be identified."

The little country woman had not heard her new friend talk in this way. She looked alarmed.

"I — I don't know exactly what you mean, sir," she stammered, "but — but if you 're trying to comfort me with the idea that Jim will ever get anything out of that money, it 's no use. We 've given that up for good long ago," she said smilingly. "And there 's worse things to lose than money so don't you worry for me," she reassured him. "Besides, now Jim's got quite some stock in the street railways in Rivertown and we 're hoping for good returns out of that — but we 're not so bad off any way."

The last word fell by its own weight for the speaker started as she spoke it, and gazed brightly at a man who had just sent a long approach shot from a hundred yards

away, whose ball was even then tinkling down the shaven surface of the green.

"Why there's Jim this minute!" she exclaimed. "That's his ball — Oh, look out! Dear, dear! There!" And relief was in her tone. "I declare I thought, one second, the ball was going plumb into that hole — but it's safe now," and she sighed happily, and the Senator laughed, and his eyes were so filled with pleased amusement as she met them that, though she did not understand, she could not but be pleased as well. He got up and lifted the rattling bagful of clubs from the floor, and waited as Muir's tall figure swung toward them. He glanced from his wife to Duke with slightly astounded eyes, and the latter spoke.

"Senator I want you to thank Mrs. Muir for me, better than I can do it, for a delightful hour," and he turned and took the little woman's hand. "I shall look forward to seeing you again — many times, I hope," he said, and was gone.

Ten minutes later the two sat on the car flying towards town, and Mrs. Muir began to ask questions.

"Who did you say that pleasant spoken young man was, Jim? I could n't catch the name, and you were in such a hurry with your paddies and your sticks and all, that I did n't like to bother you. I want to know because he's the homiest, plainest, most like our own folks of anybody I've seen yet."

Muir answered quietly, but there was a gleam in the kindly glance which rested on his wife's animated face "That was Senator Cecil Duke," he said.

"No! Is that the great Senator Duke — Well now!" exclaimed the little woman. "Why, I did n't suspicion it was anybody big. He seems as common as you or me! Why Jim, I talked away to him just as easy as if it was you."

"What did you talk to him about?" Muir's slow tones demanded.

"Oh, I don't know. The knitting began it. Then we got chattering over golf, and then, of course, Jim, you know I always do talk about you, dearie." She laid her hand in perfect confidence of being understood, on her husband's arm, and as he tightened his big muscles to hold it there, she had no hint of the sudden chill that struck in at the words:

"You ought not to bore people with me, Letty."

"But he was n't bored, Jim — he was interested. He kept asking questions. You ought to have heard him." And the vague fear closed its freezing clutch on his soul.

"What questions did he ask you, Letty?"

"Oh, I can't remember exactly, dear," she answered brightly, pleased at this detailed interest from her reserved and silent husband. "Lots of things about you, Jim — I think he must admire you a great deal."

"Did you by any chance tell him anything about my affairs — that I had stock in the Rivertown street railways for instance?"

"Yes," she nodded, smiling. "I did tell him that — I remember distinctly." There was something suddenly in her husband's attitude that frightened her. "Was that wrong? Have I made you trouble? Oh, Jim, if I have!"

Muir, his head turned away, stared out of the car window at the sliding fields, at the monotone of world which lay against an orange ball of sun. But he did not see the picture. His gaze was introspective, and he looked at the ruin of the hope of strenuous years. He knew, or thought he knew, that the knowledge of his interest in the Rivertown railways would destroy Senator Duke's faith in his support of the street-railway franchise tax bill. He had hoped, as his stock stood in another name, that his ownership of it would not come to his ears. And he knew his own honesty and single-mindedness. The ambition of ten years of his life had been to be governor of his state; when at the crucial point he had seen that the nomination hung on this tax measure and that the next governor must sign the bill which would mean to him a loss of twenty-five thousand dollars, he had considered the question carefully. He was not an extremely rich man and the twenty-five thousand dollars meant a sacrifice, but he had resolved to make it for the honor which seemed to him the crown of a lifetime — the governorship. He meant to sign the bill. Yet these men would not believe it. Certainly his chance was gone now — gone in an hour's idle, purposeless talk. A sea of rage surged, beat against the walls of his heart. For the first time in their life he was deeply, passionately angry at his wife, and stinging words shaped themselves in his mind. But he was always a slow speaker, and before the words were uttered a thought flashed across him. He remembered a promise he had made to himself when, after

the boy died, he had watched for months her struggle to fight out of her bitter sorrow, for his sake, back to life and brightness. He had said then that never would he consciously bring unhappiness to the brave and unselfish soul. He knew that it would be a knife in her heart if he told her what she had done to-day. And it was done; he must suffer, but she need never know; he would keep that unspoken promise. He put the grip of his will on the throat of the anger which seemed like a wild animal in him; slowly, strongly, he choked it back.

The little woman's voice spoke anxiously. "Jim, why don't you answer? Have I done anything that was wrong?"

He turned a face to her twisted with a tremulous smile. "I'm not apt to think anything wrong that you do, am I Letty?" he said gently, and patted her hand.

Mr. Milton B. Jones heaved himself up from his chair in Senator Duke's library. The Senator stood back as if impressed with the fear that some loosely anchored bit of him might roll off.

"So you see, Senator," he concluded, "Muir is the man, as I've told you all along, and it would n't be a bad plan to write a line to say so." Both of which thoughts were the Senator's own, so grafted on the tree of the Jones intellect that the adopted parent stem rejoiced in them as its own fruit.

"Yes," he repeated with decision, "Muir is the man and you must write and tell him so." And he bumped against the door jamb and oozed away.

The trim figure of the other stood motionless, thoughtful, in the middle of the room, a moment and then moved alertly to the table. He swept the letters aside and drew a sheet of note paper toward him slowly. "I must give the man a hint as to where his luck comes from," he murmured, and rumpled his waving hair backwards and looked hopelessly youthful as he frowned, considering. "Yet I can't use his wife's name." Then he caught up a pen and wrote rapidly.

That afternoon at five o'clock Muir's latch-key turned in his front door and his wife, up-stairs in her room, heard him come dashing up the stairs like a boy. She stood to meet him with inquiring eyes, and his lighted face told her instantly that he brought good news.

"Read this Letty," he said.

"My Dear Senator Muir," she began aloud —"The Milkman — The Mansion — What's that word Jim? It's such a funny hand."

He caught the paper. "Letty, child, you never could read writing. This is the greatest letter of our lives, and I can't have you mangle it. Listen."

My Dear Senator Muir:

Mr. Milton B. Jones, the chairman of the State Republican Committee, and I, have come to a decision in regard to to-morrow's convention, which I think you have a right to know at once. We have concluded to throw our influence in favor of your nomination for Governor, and we consider ourselves happy in supporting a candidate so fitted for the office. If I might, without impropriety add a word of personal import, I should like you to know that information of important political bearing supplied by your best friend has directly effected our decision. Wishing you every good fortune, I am, Sincerely yours,

CECIL DUKE.

Mrs. Muir listened spellbound. "I call that real nice of Mr. Duke," she said heartily, when her husband's glowing face signified the end. "But I don't just see what you're so excited over, Jim. It's friendly of those two men to be for you, but dear me! That's not so much! What's two men? I presume there'll be two hundred at the convention, won't there?"

"My dear," said Muir, "I'm afraid you will never do much in politics — your talents are not that way. Letty, Jones will manage the convention to-morrow and Duke will manage Jones. As Cecil Duke lifts his finger so the nomination goes. And the Republican nomination is the election, this fall." It was plain that the future governor wanted badly to whoop for joy. "But I can't think who the Senator means by 'my best friend'— the friend who has supplied important political information. That puzzles me. Try to help me think who my best friend is, Letty."

Mrs. Muir knitted her brows and blinked. "Now who can that nice young man mean by that?" she meditated.

"Well, we'll probably find out later," Muir concluded happily. Then he bent and drew his wife's arm about his neck and kissed the wrinkled hand on his shoulder. "I know who my best friend really is, Letty, but I don't think the Senator does. And, anyway, she has n't much influence in politics," he said tenderly.

The little woman laughed and laid her face against his. "No, 't is n't very likely that I'll ever help to make you governor, Jim," she answered.

PATSY MORAN AND THE LUNATICS

BY

ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY MAY WILSON-PRESTON

THE forenoon is not the busy time of day in Devinsky's place on the Upper East Side, and the two had the dingy little back room to themselves. Moran put his glass down on the table.

"I 'll tell ye the whole story, Tim." said he. "I 'm just drunk enough not to leave out annything, an' plinty sober enough not to skip anny of the details. An' I 'll leave it to you if the whole pack of thim waz n't stark, starin' mad, harmless or otherwise. The job we waz to pull off togither waz at a big country place up the Sound where the silver got dints in it from bein' so crowded, and they had to keep the jewelry in the cellar where the floors waz strong. It waz her always done the head-work, I 'll say that for her, an' me that tindid to the rist, but this time all that fell to me waz to float in on the scene wid me autymobile and float out agin wid the swag.

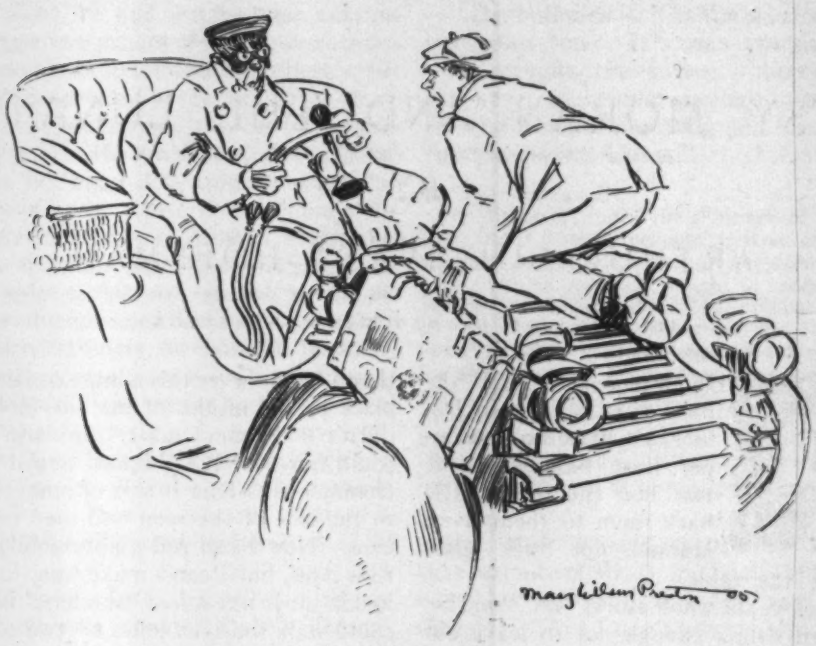
"She tuk service in the house as a maid — an' a fine, upstandin' wan she 'd make — an' it waz full four months afore she dropped me the line to be at a old, deserted house by the Cross-roads, a half-mile from the place, in me autymobile at the nefarious hour of two in the marnin'. Sure an' it waz romantic-like! But I 'd made a trip or two over the ground and studied road-maps till I could travel it even whin I waz sober.

"Well, whin the night come round I wint up to Chester in the train and there I rinted me a great big bollyswockin' divil of a autymobile, and set out for me rondyvoos, twinty-wan miles away. Maybe I had a bit too much liquor afore I started — annyways I did n't have enough, so I tuk a bit wid me in a bottle.

"The first six or sivin miles slipped away like money and thin, wid no more warnin' than I 'm givin' ye this minute, somethin' tuk place in the insides of me autymobile. It did n't make much noise, considerin', but ye could fair hear it fall apart, and it grunted tremindous. Thin it sort of staggered over to the side of the road and died before me eyes. Now I can run a autymobile whin it runs itsilf, but I can't make wan, so I stood lookin' at it like a fool, wonderin' howiver I could walk fourteen miles by two o'clock, it thin bein' well after wan.

"All at wance there come to me ears a blissid sound — the chug-chuggin' of a autymobile whin it is gittin' steam an' standin' still. I run ahead an' sure enough, just around a bind in the road, waz a big house wid grounds, and just inside the gate waz me

"'I waz all rigged up in autymobile togs, blinders and all'"



"'Are ye dead?' says I, me eyes bulgin'"

frind, the autymobile, makin' divil noises that sounded like angels to me. An' there waz no one in it.

"Now, it had been in me mind just to ask for a bit doctorin' on me own indisposed maychine, but on the way I had another nip from the bottle and thin it seemed bist to git a new autymobile entirely an' take no chances. 'Faith,' says I, 'a man's undacint an' up to no good at all to leave a autymobile lonesome an' nayglected out in the black night. It's crazy he must be,' says I, 'but I'm hopin' his autymobile ain't.' I waz all rigged up in autymobile togs, blinders an' all, an' be this time I felt the way I looked. So I crawled up on the seat and did things to the handles. By the grace of God an' no fault of mine it wint forward instid of back, an' me an' the bottle an' the autymobile wint chuggin' an' whoopin' off into the dark, the bottle leadin' the way.

"I seem to raymimber havin' difficulties wid the autymobile — a fine big wan it waz, red as sin, an' wid wan of those stubby little coffins for a cow-catcher. There waz wance whin I recall retirin' from a bit of crumbly stone-wall across the road, an' findin' a way around it. Thin it come to me that time waz slippin' away an' I pushed a lever over till it bint, and we gained half a hour in five minutes.

"We waz runnin' alongside the railroad an' I knew that whin we come to Anisley — a lonely little shed of a station where the trains stop if ye derail thim, or know the gineral manager — I waz to turn off to the right, an' I made ready to slow up a bit. Well, we come to Anisley an' we slowed up an' we turned off to the right an' we run chock into a man in the middle of the road! The whole thing tuk about wan sicond. There he waz, in the light of me big lantern, an' he give a little squirm an' wint up in the air just afore we hit him an' thin he was on the coffin-plow, hangin' on to the idge wid wan hand and to a suit-case wid the other! An' the autymobile niver stopped goin'! Tim, I 'm a liar, but I 'm tellin' ye the truth. There waz a freight train thunderin' by nixt to us and he had n't heard me comin'. If he had n't jumped up on us it 'ud 'a' knocked him to flinders, an' I 'd 'a' had a more peaceful night than what come to me. It did n't look so queer to me thin as it has since.

"'Are ye dead?' says I, me eyes bulgin'.

"He did n't say nothin' for a minute, sort of catchin' his breath. Thin he begun gatherin' himself into wan place on the plow, still clingin' to the suit-case.

"'Ye might have blowed your silly horn,' says he, kind of irritated-like.

"I knowed he waz a gintleman soon as he opened his mouth, but it got me dander up for him to be criticizin' me as a chawfur, an' he 'd scared me considerable.

"'Ye might 'a' chose some other place for spindin' the night than the middle of the road,' says I.

"He seemed to be thinkin' it over, lookin' around first at the autymobile an' thin at me in me blinders.

"'Waz you expectin' annywan?' says he, polite.

"Thin I knowed he waz a lunytic, too, or ilse I 'd knocked him silly, an' it seemed pollytic to humor him some.

"'Yes,' says I, 'I waz countin' on scoopin' up a few gintlemin from the road a bit farther on, but you come ahead of schedule. Where waz you goin', sor?'

"'I waz just goin' to climb back there an' beat the life out of ye,' says he, still polite, 'but I 'm goin' to argue wid ye instid.'

"'Thank ye kindly,' says I, pushin' the lever out agin as far as it 'ud push. 'If there 's wan thing I love it 's an argymint. Are ye a Raypublican or a Catholic, an' are ye for the Japs or agin thim?' It waz the fine, sizeable man he waz, about me own build — only if he waz a lunytic he waz bigger.

"'Yes,' says he.

"'No,' says I.

"'No what?' says he.

"'No argymint,' says I, still humorin' him.

"He kind of hunched up, tryin' to look dignified widout lettin' go his suit-case or fallin' off.

"'I waz about to say, whin ye interrupted, that I 'm in a hurry to git to Bradley' — namin' a town about two miles beyant me rondyvoos — 'and I want a lift.'

"'Ye 're gittin' it,' says I.

"'How far might ye be goin'?' says he.

"'To Everdene,' says I, namin' a town three miles this side me rondyvoos, an' lyin' because I had the chanst.

"'Me argymint is this,' says the lunytic. 'If ye take me on to Bradley, or most of the way, I 'll stay where I am, peaceable. If ye do not, I crawl back wid ye and we have a tussle for the handles. Which means,' says he, 'that nayther of us 'll git much of annywheres excipt kilt. An' I take it ye 're in somethin' of a hurry yersilf.'

"'Not to git kilt,' says I, 'nor yit to git to Bradley. But since ye insist, I 'll be after bein' proud to take ye a bit beyant me destination — say to the Cross-roads, if ye know where that is.' As I told ye, he waz a sizeable man, an' I could easy take him a bit beyant me rondyvoos an' lose little time over it.

"'I know,' says he, 'an' it 's a fair offer. I 'm yer man.'

"'Won't ye come back an' sit down?' I asks him, humorin' him some more an' hopin' he would n't.

"'Thank ye kindly,' says he, 'I 'll stay here. But here's me suit-case.'

"'Ixcuse me,' says I, 'but it 's in trouble I am'"

"Between us we stowed it by me feet widout ayther of us fallin' out or wreckin' the autymobile, an' after that we did n't converse much beyant some polite remarks on the weather. We wint by the turn-off to Everdene like a Jugglenut, and I asked him would he have a drink. He would n't, bein' a lunytic, so I finished the bottle mesilf an' quit talkin.'

"At last we whizzed past the Cross-roads, an' I slowed down, he affordin' some advice as how to do it, an' let him out an' watched him start for Bradley after givin' me a William. Thin I turned around backwards an' wint back to the Cross-roads. Me luck hild an' I run the autymobile a wee bit up the road to the lift across from the house — that bein' the wan we waz to take to the railroad at Granewood — an' stopped her widout explodin'.

"After seein' by me watch that it waz just tin minutes after three or fifteen minutes after two an' observin' no signs of Lucy and the swag, I made me way to the old house an' begun lookin' through it. Nothin' doin', an'

I got cold all over me. Thin I took a look from a window an', be the grace of God, there waz a woman sittin' in the back of me autymobile — an' I knowed Lucy's hat! Just as I waz takin' me eyes away a man in wan of these long autymobile coats, an' wid blinders on, run out across the road from my side the pike, carryin' something in his arms. 'He may be pursuin' Lucy from the big house,' thought I, 'or the lunytic may have met him and sicked him on me.' I made a dive for the door, findin' manny other things

"But it's no good stayin' in a suspicious-like neighborhood, even whin ye can't hilp bein' pure and innocent — and thin I knowed if they hang a horse-thief out West the man what stole a autymobile in the East waz like to be crucified. While I waz standin' in the side door, debatin' how to git annywheres at all, I heard another 'chug-chug.' 'Faith,' says I, 'I 'm gittin' the habit!' The noise come from toward the big house. 'They 're followin' Lucy,' thinks I, 'and I hopes they git her. Be the glory of God, is it drunk I

"'It's not the tremins, God bilp me!' and me heart sank"

first, an' whin I reached it this new lunytic waz just climbin' into the front seat of me autymobile, and before me very eyes he took hold the handles and away they wint, hell-headed for Granewood!

"Thin I knowed I waz holdin' the bag, and that Lucy had throwed me down for somewan ilse to divvy the swag wid. It waz all planned out careful, even to the bloke's autymobile clothes for ridin' in me own auty wid. Tim, I had n't dreamed it of her and it hurt me sore, clean apart from losin' the swag. Lucy! Think of a girl wid a nice, sweet-soundin', innocent name like that doin' a man black dirt!

am, or are they stoppin'?' Stoppin' they waz, be spicial providence, and there waz three of thim in it. 'It looks hard to borrow, 'says I, 'but I 'll talk to thim.' And out I wint, just as they come to a stop, and bowed polite, takin' off me hat.

"'Ixcuse me,' says I, 'but it 's in trouble I am. A young man and a lunytic in a auty-coat has just stole me autymobile, and here I am,' says I. 'Could ye be after helpin' me catch thim?'

"Wan of thim in the back seat leaned forward and I see it waz a woman. The others looked like boys, but they all had on auty-clothes.

"'Waz they togither?' says she, in a swate' voice but a quick wan.

"'They waz whin they lift,' says I, bowin' agin, 'but they come siparate. It 's two minutes they are on the road to Granewood. A big man and a little woman.'

"'Jack,' says she to the lad in the front seat, 'kin we catch thim?'

"'We kin catch annything,' says Jack, proud-like.

"'Git in,' says the lady to me. 'Ally, stay here and watch.'

"Ally climbed out quick, like a soldier takin' orders, and I climbed in the same way, for she was the gineral of a woman and I wanted to.

"I had n't hit the seat beside him whin Jack turned her loose. Tim, I thought I 'd moved that night, but I give ye my word it waz like bein' a Belgian block beside of this! I sat and hild me own hands for two miles. Thin I begun wonderin'. They waz after Lucy, sure, but why in the name of all that's loony is this lone woman and two boys doin' police work? And whin she learns there 's a man in the game she precautionizes be leavin' wan of the boys behind. 'She 's the rare-plucked wan for nerve,' thinks I, 'or ilse she 's dotty.'

"'She *is* dotty!' me reasonin' goes on, the idea comin' to me all of a suddin. 'They 're all dotty — ivry wan of thim to-night! There 's a lunytic asylum for swells somewheres widin fifty miles, and they 're all broke loose to wanct and robbed a autymobile stable and are scourin' of the country for old sake's sake till the police takes thim up agin! And I 'm wan of thim! And I 'm wan of thim!' I kept sayin' thim last words over and over to mesilf — 'And I 'm wan of thim, I 'm wan of thim,' just like that. The others had niver spoke a word.

"Thin the road got rougher and we wint twict as fast, and I had to let go me hands from wringin' thim and take hold the seat till it smoothed out agin. But the whole of it waz over sinful hills, and the noise we made waz drivin' me wild. At last I leaned over to Jack wid me shoulder — sure and it waz the hard thing to bring mesilf to try it! — to see if he waz real, and he waz. 'It 's not the tremins, God hilp me!' And me heart sank Right thin I took a solemn oath, that if I got out of this and iver agin wint widin tin fate of a autymobile I 'd — But while the words waz on me lips we wint round a turn in the road, and way ahead waz the dim light of the other autymobile.

"'There she is!' says Jack, half yellin'.

"They waz the first spoken words on the trip and they done me a world of good, but that waz the ind of thim, and we just kept on gainin' slow, me feelin' worse the closer we got.

"We 'd come so close we could begin to see the shapes of thim whin a awful screech rose up almost be the side of us. Whin me wits come to me I raymimbered the railroad run close to us here afore we swung off round some more hills into Granewood, but whin I took me eyes from the light and smoke of the freight engine me nerves waz jerked agin, for the other autymobile had almost stopped entirely, and waz slewin' sort of sideways from doin' it so quick. And, praise be, we waz slowin' some oursilves.

"Thin I see the man jump out, for what moon there waz waz full on thim. He said somethin' to the woman. Thin he stepped off a bit and thin he turned and run for us, wid his coat picked up about him, fair burnin' the road. I stood up, for we waz stoppin'. Somethin' caught me eye ahead, and I see the woman out on the road in the light from the big lamp of the other maychine. It looked like the auty was right on the idge of the river bridge, which waz part blocked up somehow. It waz Lucy all right, and she fair flew across the bridge and turned short into the bushes to the lift, a satchel showin' in her hand. She waz doin' him out of his share of the stuff the same as she done me. Or ilse she was a lunytic, too.

"Tim, ye till me I 'm no hand for good, quick thinkin', but thin waz the time me brain worked to the good and lost no time in the doin' of it. Here come a lunytic and a fight lopin' down the road, and there wint Lucy and the swag. I see in a flash that she waz headin' for the railroad, and it waz twict as short to Granewood be the railroad as be our road, and at Granewood there would be a train to the city in no great time, though I disraymimbered the minute. Even if there waz no fight, and the lunytics waz all wishful to go on to Granewood, we stood fair to git there too late if there waz anny palaverin' afore we started, and even if we did n't Lucy waz like to stay hid if she saw all of us there to wanct. There waz but wan thing to do, and that waz to dive into the woods after her and come up with her afore she come to the station. Thin we could take that train or the nixt, or wan the other way, accordin' to circumstances and the lunytics. So I dove.

"Well, to put it brief, Tim, that blamed river wint and flowed back for half a mile atween the track and the road afore it turned off and let me git to the rails! Thin I streaked it, but niver a sign of Lucy there waz, and I come into Granewood seein' no wan, and bought me ticket and stood up agin some buildin's across the track till the train pulled in after some tin minutes waitin' and watchin'. Niver a soul showed up at the station.

"There was nothin' for it but to give up the hunt and play safe for the city. Just as I waz preparin' to step on the car the conductor passed, and for the sake of hearin' a sane man's voice I asked did the train go all the way to New York.

"That waz where I burned me cakes.

"Whin I looked to the train agin, so hilp me God, there in the door of the car stood the lunytic I had scooped up out of the road and sint on to Bradley! It must 'a' been me voice he recognized, for he'd niver seen me face be reason of the auty-blinders.

"'Ye can't git on here,' says he, polite as iver. 'Take the nixt train.' And just thin the engine started.

"'Back to yer cell!' says I, bein' brash and tired of lunytics. And wid that I swung up on the step.

"Whin I come to, the ticket agent waz pourin' water on me face. He waz a fine big man waz the lunytic. I took the nixt train.

"And that's why I'm done wid Lucy," and Moran picked up his glass again and beat with it upon the table until a disreputable waiter came to replace it with a full one.

"It waz bad enough and more to play me crooked and go off wid another man and play him crooked and go off wid the swag, but I might 'a' stood for that if it hadn't been for the lunytics. Another night like that would see me gray-headed in me grave!"

"she fair flew across the bridge"

"Yis," said Tim, who had remained stolidly and characteristically silent while Moran talked, "there waz a lot av lunytics out that night. Here's a bit av a note Lucy bade me give yez, seein' as ye will not let her talk to yez."

Moran's loquacity deserted him, his only response being a grunt; but he took the note, and there was silence while he absorbed the contents slowly and laboriously. It was cleanly written and went direct to the point:

Patsy dear, I never got the plunder. Miss Edith caught me red-handed when I was at the silver, but she's a good fellow and told me that would be the end of it if I left the house in fifteen minutes. She didn't even notice I had on her old auto-cloak and I did n't remember it myself till after I was outside with a few things in my satchel. I was late to the Cross-roads and was so glad to see your auto that I climbed in, waiting for you. I never dreamed it was any but you that run and jumped in the front seat and went off with me. Another auto chased us and was catching up — whether they was after him or me I don't know, but I bet Miss Edith had n't peached — when our tire burst and he got out and told me not to be scared. I knew it was n't your voice back of his goggles, though he was much your size. He thought I was some one else, too, for he sort of gasped "Good God! Who are you?" and jumped back and stood there a bit. Then he turned and run like a crazy man for the other auto, which was slowing up. I did n't know what trouble it might mean, nor where you was and I knew the only safe, sure way to catch the train to town was by the short-cut along the track, so I took my bag and run for it. The train stops at a water-tank just before the station and I waited there. Some one came along the track, and I hid and a minute later three people come down a side road and waited for the train, so I stayed hid and slipped on after some of them did.

That's all that happened and it's true. I thought you had n't come at all — maybe because you was drunk again, Patsy, or something might have happened you. If I had n't seen the other auto was full of people I might have thought you was in it. Where was you? Tell me, for I swear I don't know no more than I told you and it's all like a bad dream or a lot of crazy people. Let me talk to you, Patsy, for I'm terrible lonely without

you and I can't have you thinking I done you a low trick like that.

LUCY.

Moran tossed the letter on the beer-stained table with an air of bravado.

"Is she the lunytic hersilf?" he asked scornfully, "thinkin' I 'm lunytic enough to belave such tale as that? Faith, I thought she had brains for a better!"

"There 's more brains in the little finger av her than in yer whole big carcass," growled Tim, not looking toward Moran, "an' she niver played no low game on no wan! Are yez goin' back to her?"

"I 'm not!" Moran made answer.

"Ye 're a fool," said Tim deliberately, and slowly picked up his hat from the chair beside him.

"Ye seem much interisted in the lady," retorted Moran.

But Tim did not turn around on his way to the door.

Seeing that he was unobserved, Moran put the note into his pocket before he followed.

On a bright and sunny afternoon about three weeks later, Tim was walking slowly along Avenue A when a heavy hand fell upon his shoulder, and Moran's hearty voice saluted his disturbed ears.

"Faith, and it 's glad I am to find ye! Where have ye been the day? Come with me to Devinsky's, man — it 's fair burstin' I am to tell ye."

"Um," said Tim, with nothing in his tone to suggest whether he preferred hearing the news or seeing Moran burst. But he faced about and the two started off at a pace, set by Moran, which landed them in a surprisingly short time face to face across a table in a remote corner of the gloomy little back room, lighted, even at this daylight hour, by three or four discouraged and attenuated jets of complaining gas.

Moran ordered whisky, and received two glasses of what is furnished at Devinsky's on such a request, fidgeting in difficult silence until the seedy waiter had departed. Then he began, not even stopping to take up his glass. The oversight seemed to arouse Tim's interest as nothing else had done.

"Tim," said Moran impressively, "I 've met the lunytics agin."

"I believe yez," replied Tim.

"Three of thim. But I 'll begin at the beginning an' work forwards and backwards so ye can follow me easy. Yisterday we waz up in the Bronx. Me and Lucy wint up there to talk it all over and git a breath of clean air while we waz doin' it." Tim's eyes remained fixed upon the opposite wall and, as he himself would have expressed it, Moran's tongue never drew breath. "We made it all up an' I forgive her. She 's the fine girl, Tim, for all she acted a bit unsensible that night wid the lunytics. Well, we wint over the whole thing an' reasoned it out, comparin' notes. An' thin she says, says she:

"'Patsy, what did that woman have on?'

"'Now don't be gittin' jealous, mavourneen. I niver took pains to look,' says I, feelin' proud not to be caught.

"'I 'm not jealous,' says she laughin', but I 'm thinkin' maybe it waz Miss Edith.'

"'Holy Mother!' says I.

"'Yes,' she wint on, 'she waz up an' dressed whin I lift the big house, an' I wondered thin why it waz. Did her auty-cloak have a cape on it?'

"'It did,' says I.

"'Waz there a red linin' to it?'

'Whin I come to, the ticket agent waz pourin water on me face"

"'How should I know?' says I, 'but I think there waz.'

"'An' a high collar and two double rows of buttons?'

"'God hilp me,' says I, 'I dunno! I waz n't thinkin' about her cloak. They waz

wan of it an' that 's all the rist I can remimber.'

"She just laughed again, and thin she begun askin' me questions till me head swum — what waz her voice like, an' how did she act, an' how big waz she, an' waz she a blonde or not, an' thin did it all over agin for each of the kids, an' inded up on the autymobile.

"'What did it look like?' she says.

"Me and Lucy wint up there to talk it all over"

"'It looked like the divil,' says I, promptlike, 'an' I think it waz.'

"'Waz it black?'

"'As black as he 's painted,' says I. An' thin I told her some more things about it, none of thim complimintry.

"'It waz Miss Edith, all right,' says Lucy. Thin she begun thinkin' to hersilf. It always makes me nervous-like to have a woman around that ain't talkin', an' glad I waz whin she looked up at me suddin.

"'Patsy,' says she, 'I have figured it out.'

"'Sure,' I says, disgusted. 'I figured it out that same night. They waz all lunytics, Miss Edith or no Miss Edith. If Miss Edith waz n't nutty, why would she let ye go free an' welcome whin she had ye there wid the silver in yer very hands? It 's surprised I am she did n't give ye a olive-spoon, or a carvin'-set, just to show her gratitude.'

"'It waz enough she had on the hands of her that night, as I 'm goin' to show ye,' says Lucy, disregardful-like, 'widout foolin' wid carvin'-sets an' burglarious women. Miss Edith an' the kids wint to the Cross-roads to meet some man. She don't go autyin' at two in the mornin' just for fun. An' if she had n't been there for just that she would niver have been so anxious to follow him that she 'd have took a strange man like you in wid her — meanin' no disrespect, Patsy,' says she.

"'An' how did she know it waz her man that had stole me auty? Did ye notice him sindin' anny wireless messages while you waz with him, or payin' out anny wire?'

"'For manny reasons, Patsy. Wan of thim is this — she knowed he waz to be at the Cross-roads. Whin she got there he waz n't in sight, an' the only man besides yersilf she learned waz in that other autymobile. It waz little like that there waz anny more prowlin' round there at such a hour. An' agin, she knowed I waz fair sure to take that way in leavin' an' had just about long enough to git there in time to be the woman wid him. You told her the man an' woman come siparate an' wint away together. She might have thought he waz some pal of mine, but seein' you an' not seein' him, she could sort ye out quick. Meanin' no disrespect, Patsy,' says she. 'He had stole your autymobile an' she was quick enough, bein' a woman, to guess what the mix-up had been an' that me an' the man had both took each other for somewan ilse. She waz so sure that she asked no questions, an' made no bones over takin' in the pal of the woman what'd just finished tryin' to rob her house. She waz the rare wan for nerve, Patsy.'

"'All lunytics is nervy,' says I, bein' sore on that 'bein' a woman.' 'Ye mean that the man thought you waz somewan ilse whin he jumped into the autymobile wid ye?'

"'Sure,' says Lucy. 'He took me for Miss Edith. I have it all reasoned out, Patsy, so listen till I 'm done an' ye 'll see me explanation fit it like a glove. The man come there expictin' some wan, a woman, an' there she sat waitin' for him in a autymobile. Would he be after lookin' for annywan ilse at such a place in the middle of the night? And remimber this, Patsy — me an' Miss Edith is about of a size, an' *I waz wearin' her old*

auty-cloak! He knowed that cloak an' belike he waz lookin' for her to come in a auty The woman waz waitin' for somewan all right, an' whin he climbed in it it waz ready for him she seemed, an' there was no time for talkin'. Did n't he near drop dead wid surprise whin we broke down an' he jumped out an' heard my voice, an' had his first hard look at me? Thin he run for the other auty, guessin' the right woman had followed after. Don't it all sound right, Patsy?'

"'They waz lunytics,' says I.

"'They waz not,' says Lucy, 'an' here 's what they done nixt. Whin they 'd compared notes between thim like as not they suspicioned what you waz, Patsy, an' what I waz — annyway, they wint right on wid their elopemint.'

"'They done what?' says I.

"'Wint on wid their elopemint, says Lucy. 'Are ye blind entirely?'

"'I 'm not,' says I, wid dignity, 'an' I 'm not a lunytic.'

"'Well,' says she, 'annyway, they wint on wid it. While you waz tryin' to cross that river an' I waz walkin' lonely along the railroad track, they waz bowlin' along in the sicond autymobile, around the long way be road to Granewood. At the water-tank I heard ye comin' an' hid in the bushes, not knowin' ye. Ye had bare gone by whin those three people come an' waited for the train. I niver give thim much heed, even whin they climbed on the train afore me, but now I know they waz Miss Edith and the man and Jack. Unless me mimory tricks me, only two of thim got on — it waz for Jack to take the auty home.'

"'Oh, it waz?' says I, not thinkin' of annything ilse at the moment. I leave it to you, Tim, did it sound reasonable?" And for confirmation of his views, Moran drew his first breath.

"She waz right," said Tim. "The fine, long head av her!"

"Well," replied Moran, "*I* saw the weak place in her argymint at wanct."

Tim drank Moran's forgotten whisky.

"We waz in a quiet place by the river, she sittin' on a old log an' me standin' up in front of her, an' I says, countin' off the points on me fingers:

"'You say nayther wan of thim misdoubted who the other waz, because no wan ilse waz like to be at the Cross-roads at such a hour of the night. Well, there waz me at the Cross-roads, that 's wan; an' there waz you at the Cross-roads, that 's two; an' there could just as well have been a whole lot more at the Cross-roads, that 's three,' says I. Here I made a fine, big pause for me nixt words to sink in. 'And,' says I, 'there waz the lunytic what I scooped up at Anisley. Where does *that* lunytic come in? Waz n't he at the Cross-roads, though it waz n't long he stopped, an' *how* did he git from Bradley to the train at Granewood in time to knock me off of it? *Mother of God, there he is!*'

"And so hilp me, Tim, there he waz, *an' wid Miss Edith!* They had come up the path easy-like, bein' behind Lucy's back, an' me talkin'. I 'll never be as near dead on me dyin' day az I waz thin. Lucy turned round, an' the nixt sicond she waz standin' beside me, all four of us starin' at each other.

"Thin the man laughed. Thin Lucy laughed. But I kept me head an' I says, niver takin' me eyes off him:

"'Waz it a elopemint?'

"'It waz,' says he, still grinnin'. Miss Edith she just sort of colored up, pretty-like.

"'Thin,' says I, forcible, 'where is the real bridegroom?'

"'What?' says he, lookin' puzzled an' not smilin'. Thin, 'Oh,' says he, 'Oh, I see,' says he, an' thin he begun laughin' agin. Thin he sat down an' laughed some more, for they waz come to the log be this time.

"'Where,' says I, niver changin' a muscle of me face, 'where is the man what took this lady to the train at Granewood? Did ye knock him off the same as me? An' how did ye iver git to Granewood annyway? Ye must have flew thim last few miles to Bradley.'

"'I'm both of thim,' says he, 'an' I niver wint to Bradley.'

"'Glory be!' says I, an' thin I saw the whole thing to wanct. Do ye see how it waz, Tim? That lunytic what I got at Anisley niver had no intentions of goin' annywheres but the Cross-roads, an' whin I took him a bit beyant towards Bradley he just slipped back through the woods, took his auty-clothes out of his suit-case, jumped into the auty wid Lucy, thinkin' she waz Miss Edith, an' away they wint. It come out later that Miss Edith was to come in a auty if she could, an' afoot if she could n't, so he did n't worry none whin he noticed she waz in my auty instid of Miss Edith's.

"I waz just goin' to explain it to Lucy, whin ivrybody begun talkin' to wanct, an' I just done the same. We waz all talkin' it

over sociable-like, an' ye 'd niver have suspicioned that we 'd tried to burglar their house an' that they waz very dogs for swell. They figured out more of what happened than what we had, an' done it quicker, havin' most of the facts. The reason he acted so queer whin I picked him up at Anisley waz that he waz expictin' a frind in a autymobile — which autymobile waz the very wan I waz in at the time, me havin' stole it from his frind just as he waz ready to start in it himsilf. Thin he lied to me the same as I waz lyin' to him. The rist is easy, because most of the rist waz about as Lucy suspicioned, though she jumped at it hasty.

"Well, Tim, we had a good laugh over the queer things of that night, an' Lucy wint an' told thim how I 'd thought ivrybody waz lunytics, an' they laughed some more.

"An' thin they waz leavin' to catch a train for their new home, an' ivrybody said good-by regretful.

"They waz n't gone fifty fate whin Lucy, who 'd said niver a word since they lift us, run after thim, an' they talked some more an' Lucy kissed Miss Edith's hand an' I wanted to mesilf.

"Whin she come back to me she waz smilin' all over, but her eyes waz kind of damp-like.

"'Patsy,' says she, 'Miss Edith says as how her husband would come down to chat wid us sometime, for he thinks you 're amusin', Patsy, if we tell him where to find us an' will burgle thim no more. An' I done it, Patsy.' Thin her eyes run over a little an' she sniffled some. An', of course, I couldn't do nothin', because there waz n't nothin' the matter excipt that she waz feelin' good.

"'An' Patsy,' says she, 'Jack has brought thim her own autymobile what she had that night, and he will take us ridin' in it.'

"'Me?' says I. 'In that? Thin they *waz* lunytics!' says I. An' we wint on home.

"Waz n't it the queer mix-up, Tim? Faith, I waz so interisted in the tellin' of it I did n't know I drank me whisky."

"Yis," said Tim.

"Thin the man laughed. Thin Lucy laughed. But I kept me head"